FLYING FARMERS ASSOCIATION



Newsletter No. 125 ***July 2017***

Chairman's Ramble

Inside this issue

Chairman's Ramble	2
FFA News	3
Programme 2017	6
Summer Events 2017	6
Aviation Insurance	16

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Cover photograph by Roz Stephens - Battle of Britain Memorial visited on the Tour of Kent.

Joined Since 1st March 2017

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8607	Martyn Wiseman, Selby
8608	Will Stonham, Great Dunmow

As I write this I am sitting in the blistering sunshine in the South of France enjoying the hospitality of the Bellerby family before flying down to Sardinia for a day and then on to Malta for 5 days with another flying group to celebrate, amongst other things, the 75th anniversary of the awarding of the George Cross to the Island for its efforts in the Second World War. Consequently this note will be necessarily short as my mind is now mostly in neutral!

Just before leaving the UK I managed to cut, bale, cart and store this year's hay crop. As usual the storing was done into a tin-roofed shed with a 30° sun beating down and making it truly unbearable for more than 20 minutes at a time. I am lucky that the guys that help me have forgotten how unbearable the job is by the time 12 months have passed! How much longer can I face doing hay like this - or even at all - I'm not sure. The demand seems to have dropped off in recent years with more open winters and the greater use of haylage by horse owners.

Harvest has started here in the south east of the country, but I have heard nothing of results as yet. As we flew through France, a good 70% of the harvest seems to have been completed, with many fields already cultivated. My father would have been horrified by the speed things happen nowadays - but that is all down to the advancement of technology and chemicals - and of course different thinking towards the whole farming scene.

Crops generally look pretty reasonable around our area, but I remember flying around the country during the spring time and looking down, thinking how very poor a lot of crops seemed to be. As for my own minimal acreage, it probably looks the worst it has ever been, and I am really ashamed by it. I don't really blame my contractor - the wheat is second wheat which suffered severe chemical effect with an 8 week period of dry weather not allowing the crop to get going and the chemical therefore had a more severe effect than intended, and the remainder is spring barley, grown to try to overcome the bad black grass problems we seem to increasingly suffer from - but the dry weather affecting the wheat also affected the germination and subsequent growing away of the barley crop. All in all a sad and rather depressing outlook for us - hopefully not replicated around and about on other farms.

All the planned flying visits for the year have now all been completed and have all been very successful and well supported. Just one visit (to the John Innes research centre) was severely hampered by bad weather but still some stalwart member took to their cars to join the organiser for that event. There is a possibility it may be rescheduled for a future year. It is so important to the running of our association that people step forward to organise these events, and it is with enormous gratitude to ALL organisers that the FFA give their ongoing thanks for their efforts. It must not be forgotten that our events secretary (Rick Holt for this year and the preceding 6 or 7 years, and Neville Stops assisted by Gordon Bellerby for the upcoming years) have a large role to play in the organising and coordination of the events along with the trip managers themselves. Thanks to you all.

I'll give the subjects of my pet hates (bureaucracy and global warming) a miss for this newsletter, and hop off back into the sunshine and the swimming pool!

I wish you all a good run and happy outcome for this harvest - and look forward to seeing many of you at the AGM in October

Martin Gosling

Committee Members

Dick Walgate	President	01472 371203
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Under The Wire

This book comes thoroughly recommended by Roger Bell. Details on this website:- http://malcolmhaywood.wixsite.com/underthewire/underthewire



Committee Meeting

The FFA Committee met at Pent Farm, following the 2 day Kent meeting - reported elsewhere in this issue.

An idyllic setting in a chocolate box cottage in equally impressive gardens, just a few yards away from Pent Farm airstrip. Thanks to Chris Reynolds and his family for letting us use his dining room.

All 6 committee members were present.

Due to Philip Young retiring from the committee, it was decided to co-opt Giles Abrey to fill the place. Giles is one of our youngest members and following an excellent visit to his farm in 2014, it was clear to see that he is one of the most progressive and enthusiastic farmers in the country.

The Secretary and the Treasurer have had a sort out with the membership and expired those that haven't renewed subscriptions and those that have been uncontactable, to remind them to pay. We have also had a few retire and unfortunately a few have died. So the tally at the moment is 404, as we had a few join recently as well.

The Treasurer gave his report on the budget and all seems to be ticking along nicely with a continued small margin.

The Events Secretary, Rick Holt gave his report and up to now this year there has only one event which proved difficult or virtually impossible for flying and that was the John Innes Centre. As usual, enough members drove to make it worthwhile. Other events are reported on in this newsletter.

Rick is retiring from his position at the forthcoming AGM and Neville Stops is fired up to carry on Rick's good work. He has a number of events proposed for 2018 and will keep the Secretary informed so that these can be posted on the website as soon as dates are available.

Neville is also keen to form a guide or check list for organisers of events, to help them and make sure that a protocol is followed.

Sad News

The first few months of the year started off badly with news that 4 of our members had died. The comments below are not meant to be obituaries, just a reflection of their participation in the FFA.

Bart Woodhall (17/04/1929 to 30/03/2017) was one of the founder members of the FFA and held various positions on the committee. He was Vice Chairman at one time, but will be best remembered as the Events Secretary, until Anthony Kedros took over in 1995. He ran a number of foreign tours from the start, flying his Helio Courier and set the precedent of this annual event.



John Dunford

Pat Nutt (06/05/1929 to 22/03/2017) was one of the very first members and attended many events and AGMs until he was in his 80's. Many will remember Pat as a sole pilot on the foreign tours. He sometimes took another member, but usually ended up falling out with them as he was a very disciplined pilot - he liked to plan and fly his aeroplane in his own way and didn't like being messed about.

Malcolm Easey (09/10/1940 to 29/01/2017) was one of the biggest pig farmers in the country and flew his helicopters round his sites. He had to have two so that when one was in for service, he could still fly. Malcolm pushed his boundaries by coming on a tour to Portugal and Gibraltar in his Jet Ranger which was challenging because of the relatively short range and having to divert for Avtur when the rest of us were landing at smaller airfields that only had Avgas.

John Dunford (02/08/1928 to 09/01/2017) was a member from Hampshire who I only met occasionally. But I do remember his enthusiasm when he accompanied Tony Fisher on one of our Australian flying tours. He used his Piper Cub to fly from his home strip in Hampshire to his other farm on the Isle of Wight.



Pat Nutt in his Robin and Bart's Helio Courier, G-BAGT alongside in Croatia, 2001

Updating the Database

We are getting to the point where our membership database is getting a bit out of date as members often don't remember to update their profile or let us know if their emails, mobiles or even their addresses change.

So, please find a loose sheet in this newsletter with your details on. We would be very grateful if you can check them, correct any mistakes and return to me. Or even just drop me an email with anything you want adding or updating - chix@farmline.com

E-News

I have around 200 members who allow me to send them news by email. This is out of 400+ members.

If you do not receive the occasional emails from the FFA and would like to be included, please let me know and I will add your email to the list.

For example, we just had an enquiry from a member who is having problems operating under the 28 day

rule. The FFA does not give legal advice directly (although we do have Tim Scorer who is a member and a well known aviation solicitor, who will be able to help you), but we can put out an email and report back the experiences from other members.

This particular example was a hot subject, we received a lot of responses and we can pass on problems like this to our representatives at the GAAC, GASCo and GAP (the old CAA Consultative Committee). It is surprising who we have as members in influential positions as well!

Tailored Strip Liability Insurance

Our tame FFA solicitor, Tim Scorer, has been approached by a member who has 10 aircraft on his strip plus visitors, to draw up a liability agreement to protect himself against third party aircraft movements to and from his strip. Tim wondered if it could become a special insurance for FFA members with the cost split between however many subscribe to the license to use it.

As the cost will be in the region of £1500.00 (don't hold me to that!), split between 10 members, that would be £150.00 each or split between 20 it would be £75.00.

Please let me know if you would be interested by dropping me an email - chix@farmline.com

Paul Stephens (Editor)

GASCo Council Meeting, 30th March 2017 At Lasham Gliding Club

The FFA had informed me that there was nothing significant to report to the Council.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Airspace Infringement Awareness' Course: The online testing of the 'Airspace Infringement Awareness' Course had not had a very good success rate so GASCo has been asked by the CAA to develop an equivalent to the motoring Speed Awareness Course. The idea was to educate rather than punish. The CAA would decide, depending on the magnitude of the infringement, whether a test or a course was more appropriate.

Safety Sense Leaflets: The updating of the Safety Sense Leaflets had not progressed but various ideas were being discussed with the Light Aircraft Association.

Social Media: Various social media tools were being used to advertise GASCo events, including Twitter. The CE said he would look at using Facebook as well.

GASCo *Flight Safety*: There had been over 2,000 flyers handed out inviting people to take out a subscription to ***Flight Safety,*** but these had received a very poor response. The Chairman would be writing to all flying clubs inviting them to take out a subscription.

Web Site: An upgrade to the GASCo website was underway and statistics showed it continued to receive increased hits.

Flight Safety Extra: The CE believed that ***Flight Safety Extra*** could be more visually attractive. The current readership was over 6,500.

EDITOR'S REPORT

The Editor was grateful to **Pilot** Magazine for permitting an article to be reproduced in the Summer edition of **GASCo *Flight Safety*** regarding carbon monoxide poisoning and the inadequacy of the 'disc' type detectors that turn black if there is CO^2 present.

The Editor had also received a letter and photographs about loose objects found in the engine compartment of an aircraft.

DR MIKE BROMFIELD, COVENTRY UNIVERSITY

Loss of control and other GA Research Topics: Dr Bromfield said that he was currently working on the definition of LOC in flight and looking at prevention and recovery strategies. Research was also being undertaken into the effectiveness of AOA systems; flight data monitoring; stall recovery methods; student pilot training; use of portable flight data recorders and running flight test courses for more than 300 students.

MEMBERS REPORTS

RAF Flying Clubs Association: The RAFFCA was concerned about electronic conspicuity and had invested in FLARM. However the Association was now seeing Pilot Aware; a lightweight ADSB device and other systems being deployed. A decision was needed as to which system should be the industry standard. It was reported that hang-gliders and paragliders, a big group of 7,000 pilots, also wanted to be more conspicuous. GASCo was represented on the Electronic Conspicuity Working Group and wold lobby for an agreed definitive solution.

CAA: The 2017 1:500,000 charts had been produced incorrectly in that glider sites had been marked as disused airfields. The CAA had put in place a mitigation measure with NOTAMs to show they were not inactive sites. Hopefully the CAA would renew these NOTAMs every 90 days until new charts were produced in 2018.

The 7 sites that are incorrectly charted on the paper charts are as follows:

METFIELD HANG-GLIDING SITE (522151N 0012330E)
SALTBY GLIDING SITE (524947N 0004245W)
UPOTTERY HANG-GLIDING SITE (505305N 0030921W)
WETHERSFIELD GLIDING SITE (515824N 0003036E)
ASTON DOWN GLIDING SITE (514228N 0020750W)
BURN GLIDING SITE (534445N 0010504W)
DRIFFIELD HANG-GLIDING SITE (535942N 0002857W)

It was confirmed that the electronic VFR charts that are supplied to companies such as SkyDemon and RunwayHD would be amended

Met Office: There would be another '***Weather Decision Making'*** seminar at the Met Office on 20th September 2017.

Gerald Hackemer

Report on General Avaiation Partnership (GAP) meeting 11th July 2017

First off there was a presentation from Graham Newby on behalf of the **Airfield Operators Group** who were seeking to join the General Avaiation Partnership. This is (currently) a free-to-join properly constituted group looking to protect the interests of airfields with 2000+ movements per year and to provide information exchange. They currently have 36 airfields signed up (22 licenced & 14 unlicenced) representing approximately 2390 aircraft and 9600 pilots. After some discussion they were invited to join. http://airfieldoperatorsgroup.co.uk/

The AOPA Maintenance Working Group meets regularly and reports to GAP.

GA maintainers continue to have difficulty attracting young engineers into the business at the lighter GA end. Part 66 licence requirements are too complex here and simpler ways of getting proportionately qualified are needed. A more appealing syllabus is required for new entrants.

Self-declared Maintance program (SDMP). There continue to be detailed questions raised by owners and maintainers about this EASA LAMP replacement. Meanwhile CAP 1454 is recommended reading and there will be an explanatory article in the next AOPA magazine.

The next annual review after September 16th must go on SDMP – so all will be on SDMP by September 17th. It is not necessary to submit the SDMP to CAA for ELA1 aircraft .

New EASA GA Technical body

The good news is that EASA now has a dedicated GA technical body, EASA GA TeB, conceptually similar to CAA setting up the GA unit, and focussing on GA. The not so good news is that there is a significant disconnect between the pragmatic discussions and recommendations of this expert-led body and its superior authority, the EASA management advisory board, made up from nation state representatives. For example, TeB recommended national juristiction on medicals but the more political management advisory board disagreed.

The **General and Business Aviation Strategic Forum - GBASF** also reports to GAP.

Despite the change of government there is still a commitment to develop a concept named "Network of airfields". There is funding from government via DfT to research the requirements of what is essentially a network of protected airfields. Despite ministerial enthusiasm it is difficult to define the criteria for such a network; contribution to economy, isolation, training need, historical importance, proximity (to each other) and emergency are all valid criteria. This is much easier in places like US or France where there is essentially a government network. If members have any ideas as to what the objectives of such a network might be and nominate appropriate airfields then please send to **GAAC.**

There was a long **discussion on airspace** with much emphasis and criticism of the unaccountability of the CAA's airspace department which was said to be made up of mostly ex-controllers. It was asserted that change is pushed through regardless of consultation and that airspace policy takes no notice of VFR despite promises that it would in DfT strategy. Unfortunately GAP does not have any direct influence on airspace policy but the frustration and discontent is clear and understood by the GA unit such that we hope we can engender some cultural change here.

8.33 Update

We all know that from 1st Jan 2018 aircraft must be 8.33 capable to fly in airspace where radio is mandated. Ground stations need to comply from 31st Dec 2018.

It is clear that the avionic suppliers are "maxed-out" doing this and the ability to get anything else done it almost nil. While mumbled, there is still not open talk about any delay in the legislation. Beware that other member states have already implemented.

Exemptions : CAA has applied for exemptions in the UK FIR for emergency, SAR, ACARS (Aircraft Communications Addressing and Reporting System), LARS, 30 A/g freqs, and some sporting freqs. You can transmit on these exemption frequencies and, of course, you can listen to anything. Confusingly, different categories of exemption expire on different dates starting with LARS in June 2020 but its all in CAP 1533 if you want the detail.

Funding :

CAA hope to process the 1st tranche by end July with payment by BACS shortly afterwards. This first tranche amounts to about £800,000 so there's plenty left from the pot of €4,3m for the 2nd tranche which closes on the 30th Sep 2017. Common misunderstandings include : the process is unaffected by Brexit, the radio does not have to be fitted at the time of the claim, the money has not run out, you can have more than one radio, "My friend says he's been paid" – he's lying, and no, you can't claim for a CDI if the old one doesn't work with your new 8.33 NAV/COM.

Of the applications received so far, 50% have had incorrect information particularly absence of proof of payment, ie the receipt, not just the invoice AND lack of additional proof for claims over £5000 (gross) involving bank statements.

Review of JSP360 - Civil use of MoD airfields.

There is going to be a review of the Civil use of military airfields, to be complete by Oct 2018.

It is an attempt to get a coherent policy across all MOD airfields. PPR is likely to remain, Military activity will remain a priority eg excluding fast jet bases during ops hours and access will exploit irreducible spare capacity, ie they won't extend any resources just to accommodate GA. There will be questions of PPL competence and safety. Any FFA member comments to me please and I will submit.

GAU Team updates

GA Unit team leaders give reports on current issues and progress.

FCL is currently looking at Performance–based Navigation (PBN) requirements for the IR & EIR. (PBN? – its about using GPS under IFR). Somewhere along the line, IR pilots will be required to meet some training requirement or endorsement but its still a little sketchy.

CAA can continue to issue the IMC rating until April 2019. Thereafter they will seek to continue this privilege and then consider the PBN requirements for this rating also.

Remember you cannot fly EASA aircraft on NPPL or UKPPL after Mar 2018.

Flying Instructor/Examiner Availability

David Cockburn from Air Pilots gave an impassioned plea for CAA to look closely at the issue of Flying instructor and Examiner availability. There needs to be a pragmatic look at the legislation and regulation that creates disincentive to uptake. In particular, he criticized the level of examiner fees which is making examiners more scarce.

Andrew Cragg

Programme 2017

24th April	Re-Visit Bletchley Park - Chris Moore
3rd May	Farm Visit - Bob Germany
17th May	John Innes Centre - David Soul
1st June	FFA European Tour to Poland - Peter Gale
20th June	2 Day Visit to Kent - Andrew Cragg
6th July	Laverstoke, Hampshire - Jody Schechter's Farm - Warwick Banks
10th October	AGM, Turweston - Martin Gosling
24th January 2018	London meeting, Hendon, the RAF Museum - Neville Stops



Please note - if you happen to see anything in your area that would form the basis of an interesting FFA visit, then please contact the Events Secretary, Rick Holt *rick@randlholt.co.uk*

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.

FFA AGM, Turweston 10th October 2017

The FFA will hold their AGM at Turweston Airfield on Tuesday 10th October 2017.

As per the last few years, there will be no charge for the event and it will be for members only. Membership includes your wife / family.

Philip Young retired from the committee earlier on this year and Giles Abrey has been co-opted by the committee to take his place until the AGM, at which point he stands for election.

It is the turn of Rick Holt and Gordon Bellerby to stand down from the committee. Rick will also be retiring as Events Secretary but is willing to stay on as a Committee Member. Gordon has offered to assist our new Events Secretary (as of the AGM), Neville Stops. So both are standing for re-election.

If any member wishes to volunteer for election onto the committee, please fill in the reply slip and return before the cut off date being one week before the AGM, which will be 3rd October 2017.

The speaker at the AGM this year will be our member Warwick Banks who will talk about his motor racing and flying interests. Warwick was a race winner in British Formula Three for Tyrrell Racing during the 1960s and was team-mate of Jackie Stewart during his first season in 1964. He won the European Touring Car Championship in 1964, and in 1965 he finished runner-up in the British Saloon Car Championship with a class winning Mini Cooper.

Please complete the reply slip and send to Martin Gosling.

Timing and further details will be sent to those replying and on the FFA website.





Bletchley Park, 24th April 2017

Due to the popularity of this event, the Flying Farmers visited Bletchley Park for the 3rd time, the previous visits being in 1998 and 2012. As on those previous occasions, there was a very good turnout with over 50 members in attendance.

We flew into Turweston in good weather and met in the Flight Deck Café on the first floor of the new Tower building, opened in December 2016. Overlooking the lake and the whole airfield, this must be one of the most up to date and amazing facilities in the UK. So much so that the seed was sown to revisit Turweston for the 2017 AGM in October.

Unfortunately, Chris Moore our organiser, was out of the country on the day. Chris is not only one of our active members but also the Deputy Chairman of the Bletchley Park Trust. However, Christopher Kennedy, one of the senior Trustees met us at the airfield and chaperoned us to the Park.

Bletchley Park during the war was an extremely secret establishment and all the staff had to sign the Official Secrets Act for life. It is by no means a secret now with over 200,000 visitors in 2015 and a huge £20 million investment program being carried out.

Our guide took us round the Park before lunch and brought the place to life with his easy-going manner and the facts and figures rolling off his tongue for a couple of hours. He explained that the house and around 58 acres were purchased by Admiral Sir Hugh Sinclair who was the head of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) in May 1938 with his own money, as the Government said they couldn't afford it. He could see it being a good base for the SIS in the event of war. This was based on its central location in the country and the close proximity of the railways with links to all the major cities plus the universities of Oxford and Cambridge where he envisioned the codebreakers would come from.

By 1945, the staff peaked at 10,000, yet the local people in the village of Bletchley still had no idea of what went on. They did wonder why all these eccentric people made their way to the Park every day and formed a theory that it was maybe a lunatic asylum! In fact, the staff held their secrets for decades and there could still be facts to emerge.

It is reported that Keith and Mavis Batey met when they worked as codebreakers and married, yet they never even talked to each other about it - ever. This couldn't happen nowadays with social media where people seem to want to broadcast to the world about every move they make!



Of course, what went on in there was the intercepting of coded signals from not only the Germans, but the Italians, Russians and Japanese. The Germans and Italians used the supposedly unbreakable Enigma machines (see above photo) which were enhanced even further during the war with added rotors to make the messages even more undecipherable.

The messages coming in would number in the thousands every day and the staff worked up to 16 hours a day in the Nissan huts with the heat and noise from these early code breaking machines, which were basically primitive mechanical computers.



We were honoured to have lunch in the mansion, before spending the afternoon wandering round the Park and visiting the various huts, the exhibitions and the museum. A lot of us have seen the film The Imitation Game where Benedict Cumberbatch plays the part of Alan Turing, one of the more famous codebreakers, and as we wander round we try to make connections between the film and what we are faced with. The film was an American production and although very watchable, perhaps a little artistic licence was used, not only with the settings but also with Alan Turings private life not being portrayed totally correctly. He was treated with ignorance about his sexuality which probably led to his suicide in 1954, after his brilliant mind helped to shorten the War by at least 2 years, saving millions of lives. The official pardon came 61 years later from the Queen.

It was a very interesting day and no doubt we shall return again in the future.

Paul Stephens

Visit to Bob Germany's Farm, 3rd May 2017

Bob Germany kindly arranged for us to view his arable and broiler operation in Lincolnshire. Around 25 aircraft flew in to two strips, Caunton on the farm itself, and Rectory Farm 3 miles away. These strips are both 03-21 so there was some excitement when people gave position reports without mentioning which airfield they were using.

Germany Farms is a 3000 acre arable operation and has 4 broiler units producing 6.7 million broilers per year. They have recently installed two Unicomfort biomass plants which both heat the sheds and generate electricity. This saves a large proportion of their gas consumption as well as earning RHI. Along with this the chicken muck can be used as a free fuel and the ash produced still has the same P and K as it had before it was burnt.





Lunch was taken at the Caunton Beck. Bob's sons Chris and John were on hand to answer all our questions, together with engineers from Unicomfort. After lunch we saw a selection of huge farm machinery. All agreed this is a very impressive operation.

A special thanks to Jean, Bob's daughter, who I understand largely organised the day.

Rick Holt



FFA Polish Tour, 1st to 10th June 2017
Organised by Peter Gale and Marcin Tatara

Diary in blue by Peter Gale, other contributions in black.

Thursday 1st June

Winston Lee and myself set off at 8am from Wiltshire in good weather for our first leg of the 2017 European Tour. 3 hrs 5 mins later we landed at Koblenz Winningen EDRK, where we were met by a friendly member of staff to clear customs. The fuel had only just been delivered so lunch was advised while we waited for settlement. At lunch we were joined by many other members of the tour and the usual shared experiences of our travels began.

After lunch we departed for Letanany LKLT and 2 hrs 10 mins later landed on the 900m grass strip on the East side of Prague, Czech Republic, where we were met by my Polish friend and tour organiser Marcin Tatara. We were fortunate with good weather and light tail winds which enabled all 15 aircraft to arrive with no weather diversions which must be a near record for FFA tours.

We transferred by 2 x 20 seater coaches to the Andels Hotel where Marcin had laid on welcome gifts and a "light buffet". Here we met up with Wendy, George and Clair who had travelled by scheduled airline. This was the start of the Gastronomic Experience!! More later! The Pole's seem to eat enormous amounts of food and yet the general population don't seem as obese as we see in the UK. We were then led by Marcin to a local traditional Czech restaurant for supper.

Friday 2nd June

We boarded the coaches for a country excursion to a farm visit that specialised in a milking goat herd and farm shop diversification. Lunch was at a Castle with views from the dining room over the River Elbe. Lunch was followed by a vinery tour in the cellars and of course a wine tasting.

We then returned to Prague for a guided city walking tour.



Saturday 3rd June

An early start for Letnany airfield with a 40 seater coach. Our 2 smaller coaches having left Prague at 4am with Marcin and some excess luggage to reach Kracow ahead of the aircraft. Well a traffic accident scuppered the best made plans and we arrived at Kracow EPKP at least 3 hrs before the coaches but the airfield was busy parachuting and we were spectators to 2 Antonov's taking off in turn. There was a Greasy Spoon at a next door garage where an early lunch was a welcome diversion so when the coaches eventually arrived we were ready to transfer direct to the Auschwitz Museum which was a very sobering visit. Some chose the alternative of a famous Aviation Museum.



(Just as an explanation - Peter had a great idea. Instead of organising buses at each destination, the same buses would travel in advance of the aircraft, carrying excess baggage. Wendy, George and Claire flew commercial to Prague and were intending to travel with the buses)

The Story of George's Bag

Where next?
I wandered lonely as a bag
That moves around on planes, or buses,
When all at once I lost my way
In a room, of Flying Farmer's baggage.
Where to next? – west or east?
An inconvenience, to say the least!

Our plan to see Poland by bus was not helped by the buses leaving each destination at 02:00 or 03:00 – which was fine for baggage, but not so good for passengers. The big mistake between Prague and Krakow left me with a bag of kimonos. Frankly, not my style – or fit!

With only what I stood up in, the rest of the tour looked grim (and smelly). However, with the kindness of fellow flying farmers and the helpfulness of Marcin, I coped! Marcin arranged for my bag to be sent by courier to Lublin and then Gdansk – but it was always one destination behind – sent by post, not courier.

Thanks must go to John Golden, Neville Stops, David Soul and Martin Gosling for making it possible for our flights between destinations. We really didn't fancy 2:00 am starts with the buses. Fortunately, I still had my passport with me, so they would eventually let me back into Stansted.

A great tour, thanks to the organisers and the rest for great company.

George Sly

P.S. My bag, as of July is still in Poland with Marcin, awaiting dispatch!

Sunday 4th June.

All aboard the coaches to the Famous Wieliczka Salt mines which was spectacular.

Opened in the 13th century, the mine produced table salt continuously until 2007, as one of the world's oldest salt mines in operation. Throughout, the royal mine was run by the *Żupy krakowskie* Salt Mines company.

The mine's attractions include dozens of statues and four chap-



els carved out of the rock salt by the miners. The older sculptures have been supplemented with new carvings made by contemporary artists. About 1.2 million people visit the Wieliczka Salt Mine annually.

The mine is one of Poland's official national Historic Monuments (*Pomniki historii*), as designated in the first round, 16 September 1994. Its listing is maintained by the National Heritage Board of Poland.

The Wieliczka salt mine reaches a depth of 327 meters and is over 287 kilometres (178 mi) long. The rock salt is naturally grey in various shades, resembling unpolished granite rather than the white or crystalline look that many visitors may expect.

In the 13th century, rock salt was discovered in Wieliczka and the first shafts were dug. The construction of the Saltworks Castle in Wieliczka (the central building – "The House within the Saltworks") – head office of the mine's board since medieval times till 1945. The Saltworks Castle was built in the late 13th to early 14th century. Wieliczka is now the location of the Kraków Saltworks Museum. Many shafts were dug throughout the time the mine was in operation. Different technology was added such as the Hungarian-type horse treadmill and Saxon treadmills to haul the salt to the top of the surface. The mine features an underground lake; and the new exhibits on the history of salt mining, as well as a 3.5 kilometres (2.2 mi) touring route (less than 2% of the length of the mine's passages) that includes historic statues and mythical figures carved out of rock salt in distant past. More recent sculptures have been fashioned by contemporary artists.

The Wieliczka mine is often referred to as "the Underground Salt Cathedral of Poland". In 1978 it was placed on the original UNESCO list of the World Heritage Sites. Even the crystals of the chandeliers are made from rock salt that has been dissolved and reconstituted to achieve a clear, glass-like appearance. It also houses a private rehabilitation and wellness complex

During World War II, the shafts were used by the occupying Germans as an *ad hoc* facility for various war-related industries. During the Nazi occupation, several thousand Jews were transported from the forced labour camps in Plaszow and Mielec to the Wieliczka mine to work in the underground armament factory set up by the Germans. However, manufacturing never began as the Soviet offensive was nearing.

Some of the machines and equipment was disassembled, including an electrical hoisting machine from the Regis Shaft, and transported to Liebenau in the Sudetes mountains. Part of the equipment was returned after the war, in autumn 1945. The Jews were transported to factories in the Czech Republic and Austria.

The largest excavation accessible to tourists is the Stanislaw Staszic Chamber. The chamber measures 36 m in height and has become a part of the history of extreme sports, aviation and it is also mentioned in the Guinness Book of World Records. A very exciting event took place here – the first Underground Balloon Flight. Bungee jumping was also practiced.

Neville Stops

In the afternoon we returned to Krakow for a city tour on 4 electric buggies which was great fun. This also included an unscheduled thunderstorm but with the plastic side curtains dropped down the buggies were surprisingly waterproof. This was followed by another group supper in a modern restaurant.

Monday 5th June.

Another early start onto a 40 seater coach to the aircraft for a short flight to Marcin's home town of Lublin EPLB being the International city airport where Marcin had arranged a special landing fee deal. As usual we arrived en-masse too early which meant some of us had to orbit to accommodate the departure of a commercial flight. After a lengthy refuelling, we departed for another Gastronomic Experience at a local innocent looking roadside restaurant. The interior is all based on an uncut wooden construction. They specialise in huge portions of food

which it's impossible for anyone to consume!! To cap it all we were served with giant jam donuts which most people took away in doggy bags. The restaurant owner owned a pig farm and all the leftover food was fed back to the pigs. We then transferred to Lublin city centre for a guided tour of the city and a visit to the Castle Museum. A Buffet Supper was held in the modern penthouse restaurant of the University Building where we met English speaking people living in Poland.

Tuesday 6th June.

Back to the University Conference Centre this morning for a conference, speakers including the County President (our high Sherriff) The Marshal, (our Mayor) and our very own Chairman Martin Gosling. This was followed by coffee in the foyer where there were various small trade stands with tasting of local food products. We were then transferred by a solely electrically powered bus to the Ursus tractor and bus factory. Although we were all interested to see the bus propulsion unit we only got to see the batteries and kept discreetly away from the transmission unit.

Next visit was a Museum of a beer factory where we got the chance to



sample their product range followed by an outdoor BBQ lunch.

In the evening we were taken to the grand 15th century Manor Anna where we were treated to another outdoor BBQ in some beautiful gardens.

Wednesday 7th June.

Today we visited the largest Flower company in Europe specialising in Orchids, Anthurium and Roses, truly mind boggling!

Visit to PTASZEK Flower Company

Another brisk start and on to our now very familiar pair of minibuses. Today our first port of call is JMP Flowers. I think what was probably in most people's minds was that this was going to be some green houses and some packing sheds. A lot of the farming in Poland, as can easily be seen from the air, is made up of very small strips of land which I believe were given to citizens in return for duties on the battlefield. This has very much fragmented their agriculture but probably has a very positive bearing on the people and their attitude in that the family presumably all come out and work on their small strips. Perhaps this is the reason we have all these good hard-working Polish people propping up our systems here in the UK. Sorry I digress. We rolled up at JMP flowers to a very grand gate and entrance.

We were met by Mikau, a family member and our guide for the visit who soon took us to the greenhouses. It was very quickly obvious that this was a very well organised highly mechanised integrated operation. The first vast area of glass was for the Phalaenopsis (moth orchids). They were producing packing and marketing around 5 million per year. These plants were mainly propagated in China then grown for a year in one pot, re-potted for another year, then packed and sold all over Europe and interestingly in large volumes to Sakhalin.

We were informed that the great grandfather who started the business had many problems. Firstly, keeping it from the Russians and secondly growing it with rules of no more than 15 employees per holding.

The next greenhouse block a mere 5 ha of fully airconditioned growing conditions. Again, a very impressive unit. This was solely for the production of cut roses. The final area 3.2 ha for Anthurium production rounded off their production facilities.

This was the fifth biggest greenhouse facility in Europe. It was highly automated and a very impressive unit. This was just another surprise that Poland had for us all.

Roger & Susan Lucey

Next we visited the testing laboratories of a large fertiliser company



which was followed by a tour of the fertiliser prill testing factory.

INS (New Chemical Syntheses Institute) is a Polish fertilizer research institute which we visited whilst staying in Lublin. It is situated about 35 kilometres from Lublin.

Of the 50,000 inhabitants, some 400+ work at the institute including some very highly qualified personnel at the forefront of current research. The entire complex comprises five research plants of which we visited two.

The scope if INS's research and development covers:-

Chemical sciences including synthetic gases, water, ammonia,



nitroge, phosphorous compounds, mineral fertilizers, feed additives etc.

Biological sciences

Plant extracts and supercritical carbon dioxide extraction

Applied catalysts

Environmental protection

INS in its present form dates from 1968 and underwent a process of consolidation in 2010. At the present time it has 740 patents and an annual revenue of 60 million Sloty (very approximately £800,000 to £1 million) of which between 40 – 60% derives from research and 40 – 50% from experimental production. 10% of its costs are government funded.

Sales go to inter alia, China, USA, Europe, Colombia, Chile and Indonesia. There are 82 export contracts.

On arrival at the factory we received an illustrated presentation





of facts and figures following which we were escorted to the first of the two research centres. This was the supercritical carbon dioxide extraction research laboratory. We gathered that from various plants such as herbs, hops and paprika fatty acids are extracted to be used in the pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries.



The second visit was to a fertilizer research laboratory which amongst other procedures analyses fertilizers from various manufacturers by the granulation method. The solid matter plus water is poured into a spinning centrifuge after which the separated granules are dried and examined – some for customers with particular requirements. The full size production plant is 5/10 times larger. This laboratory is funded by the European Union, although the centre makes money from its activities.

The site of the five research institutes was very high security. All our pasports details were taken in advance and armed personnel were much in evidence upon our arrival at the entrance gate.

For those wanting more and/or more accurate information, the website is www.ins.pulawy.pl

Roger & Mary Dadd

Then on for another ride on electric buggies to visit a tourist village where there is some winter skiing.

Thursday 8th June.

Another early start for Lublin Airport to get through security before a scheduled departure as I was unable to negotiate for us to gain access to our aircraft through a crew exit. Marcin and his lovely wife Kate who were flying with Winston and I, now realised why I preferred smaller airfields, but we eventually got through security and took off for Elblag





EPEL which was the closest I could get to Gdansk. After a 1 1/2 hr transfer to our hotel at Sopot, the beach area of Gdansk, we lunched in a nearby restaurant and then walked to the beach and onto a large busy Pier.



Friday 9th June.

On the coach for Gdansk city centre and a short walk to a replica Sailing Gallion where we had our own private tour of the docks area and the river out to the sea. We then had some welcome free time to roam the old town and buy presents for the family. After lunch we visited the Amber Museum which was followed by a city tour again on electric buggies.

In the heart of the beautiful city of Gdansk, we discovered a real gem - the Amber Museum. Having spent the morning sailing on a galleon, what possible delight could Marcin provide next! We were not disappointed. Housed in Dluga Street, the museum consists of three parts, the Prison Tower, the Neck with the Prison House and the Torture Chambers. The museum presents the origins and properties of amber, as well as how the methods of collecting and processing have changed over the centuries.

Amber is a resin which is exuded from fir trees, animal and plant inclusions are present in large chunks of amber, collected as the resin runs down the tree trunks. Fascinating! The most precious and beautiful objects come from the "golden age" of Gdansk, the period in history when the city was amongst the most important amber craft centres.

Even now, Gdansk and the vicinity boasts approximately 8,000 people employed in the amber business. It is widely used to produce diplomatic gifts and is known as the Gold of the Baltic. Many beautiful art objects and jewellery are on display.

Multimedia presentations allow visitors to experience the scent

of an amber forest or to be a guest at a fashion show promoting amber jewellery. Very hands on!

The three prison cells have been arranged to reveal what can only have been a rather gruesome place, showing the preparation for an execution, a typical isolation room and a rather horrible display of torture tools! Not very nice!

For the ladies, a visit to the Museum Shop was a must, a few purchases may have been made..... Say no more!!!!!!

Karen Goddard



Back to the hotel to change into "posh frocks" for the final Gala Dinner. Marcin had booked one of the top restaurants in town and we were fed and watered in style. Speeches, thanks and presents were exchanged and a great final evening together was enjoyed.

Saturday 10th June.

A 7.30 departure from the Hotel for the 1.5 hr transfer back to our aircraft at Elblag for our departure onto the first leg of our journey back to the UK. This was the first time we had a head wind and a rain front to fly through.

Winston and I along with 7 other aircraft did an overnight in Berlin. Roger Bell arranged for our old friend Nigel Dunkley to do a short city tour. We had dinner at the same restaurant we dined in the last time we were in Berlin.

On Sunday morning after a train and taxis transfer to our aircraft at Berlin/Schoenhagen EDAZ we departed for Deventer/Teuge EHTE for lunch and customs clearance to the UK.

I am pleased to report that all aircraft arrived home safely with no incidents or weather diversions.

I would like to thank Marcin for arranging a brilliant tour, Roger for the Berlin overnight, and thank all the participants for my present of the weather vane of my own aircraft and for your participation because without your support we wouldn't have a tour.

Peter Gale.

Please note - The Kent Tour report will be published in the December newsletter

These are the 2017 rates for the FFA Airfield Insurance Scheme available through Haywards 020 7902 7800, quoting your FFA No.

SECTION 1 and 3 – PREMISES and PRODUCTS LIABILITY

Limit of Liability (any one occurrence)

	GBP500,000	GBP1,000,000	GBP2,000,000	GBP5,000,000
Annual Movements of Third Party Aircraft				
Up 100	GBP195.00	GBP300.00	GBP375.00	GBP675.00
more than 100 up to 250	GBP225.00	GBP325.00	GBP400.00	GBP700.00
more than 250 up to 500	GBP250.00	GBP350.00	GBP425.00	GBP725.00
more than 500 up to 1,000	GBP325.00	GBP425.00	GBP500.00	GBP800.00
more than 1,000 up to 2,000	GBP375.00	GBP475.00	GBP550.00	GBP850.00
More than 2,000 to be agreed by slip leader	to be agreed by slip leader	to be agreed by slip leader		

SECTION 2 – HANGARKEEPERS LIABILITY

Plus GBP100.00 for GBP500,000 any one occurrence, but limited to GBP75,000 any one aircraft.

Plus GBP200.00 for GBP1,000,000 any one occurrence, but limited to GBP75,000 any one aircraft.

Minimum premium in respect of mid term additions GBP120.00 in full, subject to AVN9A (applicable to the movements/limit banding).

All rates are inclusive of AVN52G.

FFA visit to Bombay Sapphire and the Laverstoke Estate 6th July 2017

Bombay Sapphire

The story begins with Thomas Dakin in 1761. He established a new distillery in Warrington close to the expanding cities of Liverpool and Manchester. The business ticked along for two centuries producing Warrington Gin and later Bombay dry gin. In the 1980's entrepreneur Michel Roux, having earlier delivered Absolut Vodka, launched Bombay Sapphire, the name hinting at the origin of gin's popularity in India during the days of the Raj. Today the brand can claim to having taken gin out of the doldrums. 4.5 million bottles are produced annually, marketed by Bacardi.



In 2011 the business moved the manufacturing process to an abandoned paper mill at Laverstoke, sitting on the river Test. They cleared the site extensively and opened the visitor centre in 2014

14 aircraft landed at Popham, just 10 minutes drive from Laverstoke Mill. Helped by an interactive tour guide our group of 49 visited the magnificent glasshouses and infusion rooms. We spent some time sniffing the 'botanicals' and marked our favourites on a card which was then presented at the bar and our personal cocktail was delivered. We then sat in the courtyard beside the crystal clear waters of the river. Various members saw brown trout, eels, and water voles (yes, really!).

Lunch was taken in a Double Decker Bus on the site. We then sat by the river, drinking coffee taking in the delightful setting.





Laverstoke Farm Park

After winning the Formula 1 championship in 1979 and making his fortune in the States, Jody Scheckter and his family bought the Laverstoke Estate in 1996, becoming the Laverstoke Park Farm in 2001. By 2010, 2500 acres were fully organic with a peak of 155 employees. Every conceivable crop was grown and animal raised. The farm has never made money and this year has been scaled back to water buffalo, sheep, pasture, corn, composting and a vineyard.

Laura Romney, who has given guided tours since 2010, gave us a 'no holes barred' talk on the highs and lows of organic farming. We were left with an overbearing feeling of sadness that this remarkable farm has not been a success. The wall was covered with thankyou letters from children. Laura will give her last tour later this month.

We had a bus tour of the estate passing the vineyard and composting and finally stopped to see the water buffalo being milked.

We returned to the meeting room to have a talk on the microbial properties of soil. A vote of thanks was given to Laura for such an informative visit and we returned to Popham with the threat of Charlie Bangers.

Many thanks to Warwick Banks for such a wonderful day.

Rick Holt



Hayward Aviation have a new scheme for aircraft Insurance. Please quote your FFA Membership No for discounted rates

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