

FLYING FARMERS ASSOCIATION

Newsletter No. 113 *August 2013*

Opening Thoughts

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Cover photograph;

Our Chairman enjoying the 2013 European Tour in Germany
Roz Stephens

Chairman's Ramblings

Another year gone – and good riddance too. We were pleased when 2012 turned the corner, but the trauma continued throughout the spring giving us one of the longest, most depressing periods of farming that most of will have known. March was the coldest on record, and many other weather records were beaten (or certainly felt like it!).

But, Hey! The jet stream has at last gone north of the UK and we are in a prolonged spell of gorgeous Mediterranean-type weather – and what a tonic it is. We have made a superb crop of hay – somewhat of a change from last year when we had the baler stuck, and made a serious mess of the field! Now all I have to do is cart in 2000 bales under a raging sun into a shed which will be like a furnace. I suppose I can always throw myself into the swimming pool to refresh myself!

Nature is a wonderful thing. Many of the crops which looked so diabolical during the winter and early spring have really pulled themselves together. Not perfect for sure, but a powerful lot better than many of us expected. Unfortunately the heady days of wheat at £210/tonne are behind us as well, with prices being £40 - £50 below that mark at the moment. Harvest has already started in some places (I saw a field of winter barley being cut not far from the end of Booker runway on July 14th, and several crops have been cut in the Thetford area where there is light soil. Early harvesting often means light crops that have died off, so it's not necessarily good news to be early.

If the crops are not going to be record breaking and nor are the prices, let us hope that at least we have an easy harvest weather-wise with minimal drying costs. Surely that is the least we deserve. Good luck to you all.

We have had some good visits again for our Association this year, and grateful thanks to all who have organised them and have made suggestions for others to act upon. Our success is entirely due to the membership, and we are ALWAYS looking for suggestions. Please scratch your collective heads for any ideas for the future, be it farming, cultural or just plain fun related. We need any ideas and the committee will act on them, and take them forward. The more diverse the better, and anywhere in the country (or even abroad) to give a range of travelling options to our membership. Ideas for our annual foreign study tours are also required. Get thinking while it is fresh in your mind from reading this!

I have recently returned from a two week trip to the Crimea in the south of the Ukraine along with 24 other aircraft (including 4 x Tiger Moths and 2 x Mustangs). Some of you may have followed my adventures via the TrackMyTour link, but there will be a report on the whole trip in the December newsletter. If anyone else has had some interesting flying adventures, then please write about them and send them to our secretary for inclusion into a newsletter for the membership to enjoy. Remember, what may seem dull and uninteresting to you, could be most interesting to others, and may even encourage them to do similar things.

Enjoy the remainder of the flying season and the best of luck for the harvest and autumn drilling programme.

Martin Gosling

Committee Members

Dick Walgate	President	01472 371203
Martin Gosling	Chairman	01787 269369
Paul Stephens	Secretary	01944 738281
Andrew Cragg	Treasurer	01303 874251
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FLYING FARMERS ASSOCIATION LIMITED

www.ffa.org.uk

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Joined since 1st March 2013

FFA Number		Strip
8532	Hamish Bichan, Peterborough	
8533	Cliff Bassett, Bedfordshire	
8534	Paul Beckwith, Bourton on the Water	y
8535	Adam Silvester, Worcester	
8536	Trevor Pugh, Shrewsbury	y

The total membership is now 392

Committee Meeting

The FFA Committee met at Moor Farm in North Yorkshire on Monday 15th July 2013 on a glorious sunny day. All 6 Committee members were present.

Items discussed were:-

The FFA liability insurance to cover officers and members of the Association from third party claims, has been arranged through Hayward Aviation Ltd since 1999. It was agreed that we should invite them to attend the next Committee meeting in London next February, to bring us up to date and explain to the present Committee all the details, as only one Committee member was party to the original discussions when the policy was first set up.

The Secretary explained that on the back of the new website, we now have a dedicated emailing programme which can be used to circulate any news. Previously, this was restricted to just a few mail shots per annum.

Over the previous 12 months, 11 new members have joined and 11 have left so the total membership remains at 392. There are still a few members who are paying incorrect membership fees. The annual fee is £25.00 with a £10 joining fee. There are some members who pay £35.00 every year and some who aren't even contactable, as their addresses have changed, who are still paying the original £5.00 fee. Nothing more can be done by the Treasurer as these are standing orders which have to be cancelled by the member.

The Treasurer presented the latest budget which continues to show a small margin. If the membership booklet were to be reprinted at some time, it would tip the balance and put us into a loss situation. The new website is now fully up and running and has all the membership details available to members - but only through the password system. There is also a PDF file on the website so that members can print out their own membership list in exactly the same format as the last hard copy circulated. The big advantage of the website list, is that it is up to date, whereas the hard copy is expensive to produce and mail, and is out of date as soon as it is printed.

A brief copy of the accounts can be found on the back page of this newsletter. There is a strong balance which is held in a deposit account. Interest rates are virtually non existent and the Treasurer will look at a fixed rate bond for at least some of the money.

The Events Secretary, Rick Holt reported that things had gone reasonably well this year apart from the Agrovista event which suffered with bad visibility.

There were a number of suggestions for events in 2014 including Hawker Restorations, shire horses, an oyster farm in Scotland, Sandringham Estate, Cornwall and the Scilly Isles as a 2 or 3 day event and the possibility of reviving the idea of a Tour to Finland.

The AGM - see Page 5.

We get requests every year from different branches of the Border Agency and Special Branch for information on strips from our database. Although strip information is given by members in confidence, we have always said that we should co-operate with these bodies, as well as Search and Rescue, in order to maintain a good relationship and maintain our privilege of being able to operate from our private strips.

Paul Stephens

GAAC

The GAAC are doing a lot of work to help both commercial airfield operators and strip owners to try and protect their operations from development. This is a summary from Steve Slater of the GAAC:-

Between January and June 2013, 24 different airfield, wind turbine or planning based enquiries were forwarded either via GAAC or AOPA. This brings the total number of enquiries this year close to 50, indicating a rapid escalation in requests for assistance. In comparison, between 1998 and the start of 2012, the total number of queries handled by AOPA was around 200.

Some of this additional requirement, may stem from a higher profile of the GAAC activities. Much however, range from a marked escalation in threats to locations from wind farm and property development threat. The number of queries regarding planning permission and enforcement actions, ownership/lease and access issues has remained largely static.

Housing Pressures

There is little doubt that, despite the safety clauses for airfields written in to the National Planning Policy Framework as a result of GAAC member efforts, Government policy on wind generation and housing is placing pressures on flying sites. In 2010 the Government, via the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and the Planning Inspectorate, sent letters to the Chief Planning Officers of every local authority in England, demanding that they set aside land for additional housing development.

The amount of land of course varies from area to area, but many authorities have been required to submit proposals for several tens of thousands of new homes. In such as South Gloucestershire, where the authorities were struggling to find enough room to build the new houses, the wide-open spaces of Filton airfield were like a 'get out of jail' card. Hence the closure of the airfield last December.

A similar scenario has of course, led to a high-profile 'Save Panshanger' campaign triggered by threats by Welwyn and Hatfield Council's plans to allocate the aerodrome as land for 700 houses in their core strategy document. This campaign, www.savepanshanger.co.uk, is particularly noteworthy as it is being led by local residents, who have identifited that the airfield is a better future neighbour and green space, than the disruption and loss of amenity which will be triggered by housing development.

It is noteworthy too, that a similar resident-airport partnership has recently secured local council support for Rochester Airport in Kent. Once threatened with closure, it is to be sympathetically developed on a 25-year business plan which ensure's the airfield's future.

It is less well-known is that Bourn Airfield in Lincolnshire may face a similar threat from housing. As part of South Cambridgeshire Council's response to the Government planning missive, they are looking at the airfield as a potential site for a 3,000 house 'garden village'. So far, no formal plans have been initiated, but the airfield residents, the Rural Flying Corps are monitoring the situation.

Wellesbourne Airfield is also facing development issues, following an application by the neighbouring land-owner for a hybrid industrial, commercial and housing development within airfield safeguarded area. The large proportion of this is regarded by the airfield having little impact, however significant concerns were

expressed regarding housing development which stretched beneath the approach to runway 36, a few hundred metres from threshold.

Following a series of objections, including response from GAAC to the local planning authority, the application was revised 11/5/2013 reducing scale of housing to terminate a short of the climbout/approach path. The revised plans are due to debated by the Council 4/6/2013. We are waiting further comment from the airfield before making any further submission.

Wind Turbines

The effect of wind turbine developments on general aviation continues to make up a majority of recent queries. Our policy remains that we don't just object to wind turbines "because they are there". To have a meaningful dialogue with planners, we only intervene when there is a genuine threat to airfield safety or safe GA flying and navigation.

The biggest wind turbine challenge to airfield operations in the near future is undoubtedly at Popham, which has two major developments on either side of its runways. The Bullington Cross development, 3km to the west, proposes 17 x 126m turbines. Woodmancott Down, to the 4km south east, proposes 8 x 135m turbines. The London Eye is 135 mtrs high!

The Bullington Cross development has already entered the planning process and GAAC has placed formal objections with the three local planning authorities which will rule on the application which cross their boundaries; Winchester, Basingstoke and Test Valley. These object not just on the safety effects of downwind turbulence on aircraft climbing out to the west from Popham, but the likely impact on safe VRF navigation in what is described by the developer's own aviation consultant as ""probably one of the most complex aviation areas in the country".

We have also liaised with pro-aviation MPs such as Gerald Howarth on the issue and will support the airfield which is preparing to co-ordinate what is expected to be a long and sustained campaign.

Another key area raised with the local planning authorities is the cumulative effect of multiple largescale wind turbine developments in the area, funnelling aircraft away from the developments and leading to a likely increase in overflights of Whitchurch, Overton, Micheldever and Barton Stacey; something which pilots and residents alike will be keen to avoid.

It is noted that the planning application for the second large-scale wind turbine development at Woodmancott Down, 4km south east has so far been deferred, no doubt for tactical reasons. We have however requested that the planning officers should nonetheless consider this issue in their wider planning strategy.

A number of other large wind turbine developments are causing concern due to their possible effect on safe VFR navigation. This is a particular concern if proposed developments are directly under low level controlled airspace, close to VRPs, or adjacent to intersections of heavily used lower-level navigation routes.

Shenstone in Staffordshire, Dorcas Lane in the Vale of Aylesbury and Ingst in South Gloucestershire are all causes for concern in this respect. GAAC responses have been sent to the relevant local planning authorities in each case. We also responded to concerns regarding the cumulative effect of a series of proposed 87.5m turbines along the western bank of the Severn Estuary between Chepstow and Lydney. In this case, the developers had sought to disguise the cumulative nature of the development by placing single applications for each of the seven turbines.

It is noteworthy that the refusal of permission by the council based on submissions from Kirknewton Flying Club and GAAC, of wind turbine development at Kirknewton, West Lothian, has now been upheld after an appeal by developers to the Secretary of State for Scotland. The cumulative rise to lower-level navigation by wind turbines in the area was deemed an important factor.

It should be noted however that the CAA still does not seem to hold a firm position on this safety issue, although the subject of both VFR navigation and 'pinch points' have been recently raised by GAAC at the ASIWWG working group.

Another airspace issue upon which GAAC made comment along with a number of other organisations, is the application to the CAA by the London Skydive Centre for authority to establish a parachute drop zone, ENE of Oxford City and stretching to the edge of the RAF Benson MATZ. If established it would be a major obstacle and safety hazard to safe VFR navigation on the heavily utilised north/south route, used by many aircraft to avoid Oxford City Airport and the Benson MATZ.

There are also a number of very active glider sites in the area and the area to the north is used as a training area by aircraft from Denham, Halton, Wycombe and Chiltern Park. It seems that the applicant, Mr Christian Ivory seems to have 'form' in making inappropriate applications. He wasted a great deal of time in 2011 with similarly inappropriate PJZ applications near Popham and Lasham.

Stephen Slater

FFA Website

The new website, www.ffa.org.uk is now fully operational. Over the last 12 months, quite a bit has been added with news items, photos from events and videos of the European Tour.

There have been a few teething problems as you would expect with a new website, but we are getting these ironed out now. New members join through the website by filling in an application form which immediately puts all their details into the database, where they are held as inactive, until they become active when approved by the Committee and they are enrolled.

The database and certain parts of the website are for members only and you have to be logged in.

I still get queries about how to log in. The username is your surname and membership number. The password is your membership number and surname - no spaces.

For example Stephens118 and password 118stephens.

Once logged in you can then change your password on the profile page and update your email addresses, telephone number etc.

It is important to make sure your email address is correct as the emailing program takes its addresses from this database. So if you want to be included in the mail shots, you need a correct email address on your profile.

The email program is very useful, not only for news items, but for last minute changes to events. Members can be circulated quite quickly and kept updated. So please check your details on the profile page of the website.

The airstrip mapping is working very well and it is now easy to locate a strip near where you might want to go and to be able to contact the owner for prior permission. I believe the Flying Farmers have probably the biggest database of airstrips in the world. I don't know of any other organisation that has such a database apart from the Helicopter Club of Great Britain.

If you have any problems logging in or using the website, then email me at chix@farmline.com.

Paul Stephens

Programme 2013

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5th February	Tower Bridge, London
24th - 25th April	Yorkshire Eggs & Drax
1st May	Vineyard & Camgrain, Essex
15th May	Fens Pumping Station & Rod Herbert's Factory
7th - 16th June	Battlefields &European Tour
21st June	Agrovista, Leicester and the National Space Centre
30th June - 3rd July	Northumberland
23rd October	AGM - Sherburn-in-Elmet



Events such as these set above are arranged by FFA members on a voluntary basis. It is accepted by those who participate that nothing undertaken by the FFA collectively or members individually shall be construed as establishing a duty of care nor in any way removing or modifying the duties, responsibilities or obligations of pilots or land owners in relation to any event and attendance thereat. All information provided in these programmes is purely advisory and should ALWAYS be verified from official sources.

Wednesday 23rd October 2013 - AGM

This year's AGM will be held at Sherburn-in-Elmet - which some of you will be familiar with, having attended the Yorkshire event last April.

Gordon Bellerby will be organising the event. It is intended to meet up anytime before 11:00 am for tea and biscuits at the clubhouse, where the actual AGM will be held at 11:30 am.

A good lunch will follow and then we hope to have 2 interesting speakers. One will be our member, Peter Vacher. Members will remember a superb day when Peter and Polly invited us to their farm a couple of years ago. Following some agricultural visits, we had the great honour of seeing Peter's Hawker Hurricane being displayed from his strip. He has agreed to come and recount the story of recovering the Hurricane from India after years of bureaucracy and then restoring it to today's fantastic condition.

Following the tradition of the last few AGMs, there will be no cost to attendees for the room, lunch or landing. It is felt that this is one occasion where the Association should pay the costs of having its own AGM and we encourage as many members as possible to attend. Just a note on landing fees - if fuel is taken on board (which I believe is still below £2.00/litre including VAT), there will be no landing fee, so will save the Association a little bit!

More details will be posted on the website a bit nearer the time, but for catering and organisational purposes, please return the reply slip asap and at least before 30th September.



You will also find on the reply slip a place to nominate (with their permission and agreement) a prospective Committee member. It is the turn of the Treasurer (Andrew Cragg) and the Events Secretary (Rick Holt) to stand down, although they are both happy to be re-elected.

For your information, the FFA accounts are published on the back page of this newsletter in accordance with the Articles.



24th - 25th April 2013, Yorkshire Eggs and Drax

Wednesday 24 April Sherburn Aerodrome

A bright and sunny morning saw nineteen aircraft arrive in good order, most on time, some a little late and one very late due to fog on the south coast.

All were met by Martin Gosling and David Lee on my behalf, as I was not able to return from London until lunchtime. Many thanks to both of them.

As time was pressing due to a road closure on the way to the first venue the coach had to leave slightly early so as to take an alternative longer route.

Thanks are also due to Paul Burtwistle and Chris Makin, who kindly remained behind with their cars, to pick up the late comers and transport them to the venue.

On arrival at St Helens Farm they were met Kathleen Wielkopoiska, co-owner of the business with her husband Angus. The largest goat farm in the UK which produces 20% of the UKs goat's milk.

After a tour of the state of the art livestock facilities and milking parlour, a tasting of their extensive range of goat's milk products was provided before the visit was drawn to a close.

After a buffet lunch back at Sherburn we set off for Yorkshire Farmhouse Eggs, in the village of Catton near Thirsk, which is the biggest producer of free range eggs in the UK.

On arrival we were met by James and Adrian Potter co-



directors, who have taken the business, started by their parents Sue and Roger, to another level.

They gave us a running commentary, as we walked round the site, of how they had developed the business over the last few years. We were shown 2 very impressive laying units, at a cost of a million pounds per shed each capable of housing 50,000 birds.

All eggs are collected automatically and are then transported to the nearby packing shed where they are graded and packed, by the latest computerised controlled machinery, into various sized boxes. They are then loaded onto their own transport for distribution into most of the major multiples.

As we were being shown around the site work was going on to replace old buildings with more modern new ones, making sure that Yorkshire Farmhouse keeps its edge over its competitors.

As if this was not enough the two brothers have started a business which acts as a hub for locally produced products which the then market into the multiples along with their eggs.

We then departed for the Crown Hotel Harrogate for the overnight stop.

Thursday 25th April Drax Power Station

Thursday morning 10.00am saw us arrive at Drax power station near Selby. Drax is the largest coal burning power station in Europe burning 1600 tons of coal every 40 minutes, this produces enough electricity to power 7 million homes and businesses in the UK.

It is presently undergoing modifications to burn more biomass. At the moment it generates 500mw from biomass making it the largest generator from biomass in the world.

We were given 2 presentations, the first being about Drax and the environment. We were told that it is the cleanest environmentally in the world. More pollution is released into the atmosphere by the traffic using the nearby M62.

The second was given by an engineer on the mechanics of the whole process of what it takes to turn the shafts in each of the 6 turbines (each weighing 300tons) to produce electricity.

These two presentations were so interesting and produced so many questions, from the floor, that they had to be brought to a close prematurely, as time was as usual pressing.

We than boarded a coach to view the 2,000 acres of landscaped spoil where various types of grasses, bushes and trees were being grown to stabilise the huge hills of ash being created on a daily basis.

We were then escorted through the plant ending up in the generator area which housed the 6 huge turbines (each the size of a small ship). The scale and enormity of it all was breath taking, to say the least.

Eventually we all assembled back in the Learning Centre where a vote of thanks was given by Andy Cragg.

After a rather hurried lunch at nearby Breihgton Airfield we viewed some very interesting old aircraft including the famous Percival Mew Gull which Alex Henshaw flew to Cape Town and back in 1939.

We arrived back at Sherburn to be joined by some of the ladies, who had remained in Harrogate to do some shopping.

Everyone then departed ,some more hurried than others. Jim and Angus reporting they had arrived home safely just before dark and Andy Cragg arriving at Lydd minutes before the airport closed.

So ended the Yorkshire Visit.

Gordon Bellerby

1st May, Vineyard and Camgrain, Essex

The morning dawned as one of those rare spring days with wall to wall sunshine and very little wind – and yet my mobile started ringing by 7.30 am to ask for the weather from pilots all over the country. My assurance that it was a beautiful cloudless morning with unlimited visibility was met with incredulity by most of them who had been looking at the Cambridge Metar as being the closest to my strip, and which was showing dense fog! There was also fog puddles in many Southern areas, but as these quickly began to burn off and the pilots phoning in believed my weather observations at the strip, planes started arriving, and within the space of ¾ hour, 21 planes had arrived with 2 more getting here just after the bus had departed and Annette acting as sweeper in her car. Just one plane failed to make it due to the stubborn fog at his strip.

We arrived at Chilford Hall on time and were given an immediate briefing on this very successful East Anglian vineyard by Glen, managing Director and production manager of this 18 acre award winning site set in 40 acres of rolling Cambridgeshire



countryside.

We began by a brisk walk of ½ mile to the main growing area, where Glen, who is from the Carribean, gave us an amusing and colourful talk on the growing of the vines on this particular site and why in the past the site had not been laid out in the best orientation for optimum production It was originally planted in 1972 with further plantings taking place in '74 and '76. This was just a hobby to satisfy the whim of Sam Alper, the founder, but he quickly realised that wine from 18 acres would be more than even he would be able to consume! Sam was an avid collector of sculptures, artefacts and architecture, and evidence of these could be seen all around the buildings wherever we went.

From the fields we moved back to the barns where the production storage and bottling was carried out with not-so-modern equipment, it has to be said. Plans for updating some of the equipment, particularly the corking machine, are in hand, but their minds have been focussed for the last year on dealing with the aftermath of a disastrous fire in their beautiful Grade II listed "Great Hall" caused by a disgruntled employee fired for some working misdemeanour (He is now in jail!).

Award-winning pink and white wines are produced, both still and sparkling, their flagship product being 'Aluric de Norsehide' sparkling white. With time marching on we took our seats for an excellent lunch in the Chilford Hall Garden Rooms, a semi permanent marquee-type construction in the gardens erected to replace the burnt Great Hall. This worked to our advantage because our numbers were originally limited to 40 people in the small café, but with the new Garden Rooms up and running, our numbers were unlimited.

Glen gave us a tasting session with our lunch delivered with his usual wit and repartee, but that only served to prolong the lunch as ,a number of us ordered anything from a bottle to several cases of wine to take away which all had to be fetched from the cellars and paid for. Eventually 40 minutes late, we boarded the bus for the 15 minute journey to our afternoon visit at Camgrain.

We were met by Philip Darke, the Chairman, along with his second and third in command of the whole operation, who started by giving us a PowerPoint presentation of the beginnings of the operation up to the present day.

Camgrain have two of the 13 stores across the country trading under the title of NetworkGrain UK which are all farmer-owned central storage co-operatives, operating across the length and breadth of Britain's prime cereal growing region from Aberdeen, to Kent, to Truro, and all points in between. All these co-operatives are coordinated from this one site in Cambridgeshire that we visited.

Camgrain started in 1983 with 60 farmer members and 12,000 tonnes of storage. Today it has capacity for 250,000 tonnes at its two adjacent sites in Cambridgeshire with an annual throughput of 300,000 tonnes produced from 350 farmer members. Membership costs around £115/ tonne stored with costs around £16/tonne to cover handling, drying, storage and transport.

Farmers are an independent lot and it take some effort to separate them from their own farming individuality, and on the face of it these are pretty significant costs, but think about the costs of building from new, or replacing an existing worn out storage and drying unit and the whole idea is a no-brainer. You don't tie up capital, you don't tie up labour and with Camgrain persuading you to start cutting the crop at 25% moisture or more, you don't lose quality either. It is guaranteed to be taken from the farm within 24 hours of cutting, and sometimes they have an offer of no extra drying charges to specifically encourage early cutting. There is no upper limit to the moisture – if it will go through the combine, they will take it to dry. The ONLY time a rejection would take place is for an infestation of bugs, but for nothing else (and that certainly wouldn't occur in 24 hours). Think how much more timeliness you would achieve from subsequent operations on the farm, but cutting the crop maybe 3 days earlier that you would with an on-farm drying/storage system – every time it rains. The next years crop would be in the ground well before your neighbours and you have probably had a fortnights holiday in the Bahamas by the end of August as well! Of course it is not for everyone, but for the smaller operator with less than optimum storage and reduced labour, it is a great opportunity.

Having been given this persuasive sales pith we were divided up into 3 groups to be taken around the sampling room, the storage areas, both bins and open span sheds and the multiple MASSIVE dryers. It was an extraordinary setup on an enormous scale with attention to the minutest detail to achieve the most precise quality specification. At any stage specific quality can be drawn from any part of any store in any proportion to achieve this quality, and a lorry loaded in less than 3 minutes. During harvest there are around 100 lorries on the road all the time collecting and delivering to whichever store requires whatever commodity, all with on board trackers to make the most efficient use of lorry position and destination.

More sites are either under construction or consideration, and continuous expansion is forecast. It was, I believe, a real eye-opener to many of us and gave much food for thought.

We set off back to Stones Farm much later than intended, arriving back at the aircraft at 5.40 still in unlimited sunshine, and those that had no great distance to go enjoyed a final cup of tea and biscuit, while Richard Lawrence who had to hi-tail it to base in Northumberland, set off in great haste arriving home just as the sun disappeared over the horizon.

Martin Gosling



8 15th May, Fens Pumping Station and Rod Herbert's Factory

On arrival 8.30am at Rod Herbert's airfield at Marshland St. James Cambridgeshire George and Claire Sly were already answering phone calls from pilots due to bad weather conditions – it was only 7c and not looking good for the expected 21 aircraft ! So when we saw John and Clare Golden overhead we were more hopeful Seven planes and one helicopter eventually arrived but we were delighted that so many members came by car and we were 41 in total.

Our visit to Rod's factory gave us all an insight to the varied machinery Rod and his team are producing . Rod started the business in 1971 when he designed a more efficient potato grader for a local farmer – the word spread ! He is now supplying vegetable packing plants throughout Europe and beyond. His new project a faster and more efficient Tray Return System is something to look out for now in most airports round the world – look out for the Herbert TRS when you are next struggling to put your shoes belts loose change etc . in the plastic trays !

The friendly atmosphere between Rod and his employees throughout the factory was noted by all of us. The design office showed us the advanced technology needed to build the many machines in production and some in the early design stage.

Some of the engineers are university trained but Rod also employs locally educated people. A laser cutting machine will be installed soon keeping the factory ahead in the modern world.

Included in the varied machines Rod is producing are machines for Tesco's in Spain to compress spinach to save space in transportation to the UK and the spinach is in your store now ! Optical sorting machines for washed and peeled potatoes, a stainless steel packing plant for frozen food company – are all in production. The factory has £3 million working stock in progress. Rod did tell us that he has halted airport work in Dubai until he receives some money due from them !

From the factory we were taken a short distance to Rod's beautiful home where his wife Georgie had prepared a delicious lunch for all of us.

The visit gave us a remarkable insight into this family run business (Rod's son and daughter both work in the business) which has grown rapidly and made many farmers lives easier and now touching all who travel through airports.

Thanks Rod

Wendy Burton

www.rjherbert.co.uk



Following a delicious lunch provided by Mr and Mrs Rod Herbert in their lovely home, we were bussed the few miles over some bumpy Norfolk roads to the new St Germans pumping station close to the junction of the Middle Level and the River Ouse. Apparently the roads have inadequate foundations and sit on 8 to 15mm of peat, which constantly subside and forms bumps and potholes. The local authorities struggle to cope.

George Sly, one of our much appreciated organisers, introduced David Thomas, chief engineer of the station who gave us a brief history of the drainage of the Fens.

Nearly 400 years ago, the Duke of Bedford saw the opportunity of creating farmland by draining the marshes and together with other investors set about creating a drainage scheme relying on gravity to discharge the water. There was a lot of local opposition as many people relied on the marshes for their living, but the work was commenced and farmland recovered. The Fens still tended to flood in winter and were only useful for grazing stock in the summer months. Apparently when the peat soils were exposed to air, oxidation and subsequent shrinkage of the soil occurred resulting in a lowering of the ground level. It was interesting to note that Rod Herbert's airstrip, Marshland is 6 ft below mean sea level but the land has dropped over 4 metres during the preceding centuries. Dykes and sluices were successful in keeping the land useable until the 1920s when pumps were installed to cope with increasing flooding and to allow production of arable crops. Much of the Fens is grade 1 and has the highest value of arable land in the UK.

The new pumping station replaces one built in the 1930s that was reaching capacity and developing structural problems. At one point during a period of particularly heavy rain the 80 smaller pumping stations discharging into the Middle Level drain were asked to stop pumping to allow St Germans to catch up. The concern then was that if one pump broke down breaching of the dykes would have occurred resulting in extensive flooding. 700 square kilometres of land, 22,500 houses and 3,500 businesses rely on the pumps to keep them dry. Our former member Bill Burton, was a member of the Middle Level Commission and partly instrumental in organising the construction of the new station and it was pleasing to see his name recorded with others on a plaque attached to number 1 pumps concrete plinth. The pump was named Tiddy Mun after a spirit that was supposed to control the fenland mists and water levels.

The station can pump 100 tons of water a second at maximum capacity some 42% more than its predecessor. Pumping is arranged to optimise efficiency and carried out whenever possible at low tide and night time although the maximum saving on electricity is gained by pumping against minimum head, ie low tide, but a maximum head of 8 metres is possible.

There are 6 pumps in total each with its own standby Caterpillar generator of 1700 KVA. Due to the high cost of having electrical availability, the on site sub station is only 3.4 mega watts and therefore during high volume requirements, the generators take up the slack, although only one generator has so far had to work in anger since the new station was brought into service in 2011.

In the event of a grid outage the generators would earn their keep, although our guide, the engineer responsible for the design of the pumps and now one of the 4 engineers responsible for the station, Richard Lloyd, indicated the station could be down for nearly a week under average conditions before the Fens became inundated.

The statistics of the construction of the site, the pumps, the fuel reserve, the control systems and computerisation were impressive

and we were each handed a leaflet outlining these statistics. I was particularly impressed with Richard's explanation of the pump volutes that were cast in reinforced concrete around precision formers placed below water level inside a temporary cofferdam constructed in the widened channel. The centrifugal pumps have a vertical shaft driving the 2.65m diameter impellers at a maximum of 127 RPM. The lower bearing in each pump is ceramic (cost £30k each) and is lubricated by the pumped water whilst the upper is oil lubricated. The pump seal is a large rubber lip type lubricated by clean water that is held in a 1200 litre reservoir for each pump and the epicyclic 7:1 reduction gearbox has its own separate pumped oil supply.

The whole station is normally unattended and runs on a completely automated programme using ultrasonic water level measurements from around 20km upstream. Filter bars on the pump intakes are automatically cleaned when the difference between water levels on either side of the filter bars exceeds a certain parameter. Penstock gates control reverse flow through the pumps during a rising tide and the pumps are automatically run up at low RPM to prevent them running backwards before the gates are opened and pumping starts. Speed control is by use of Inverters that convert AC input voltage to DC and then back again enabling control of the output frequency and hence the speed of the 6 pole synchronous motors.

The station boasts an eel ladder to allow eels entry into the Middle Level and during dry periods water is fed into the system from the River Nene to allow extraction from the drains for irrigation. If the water level is pumped too low in the main channel then inward collapse of the banks will occur, so level control is important.

One of the members asked if float plane landings were permitted on the Middle Level and Richard promptly replied in the negative unless special permission was obtained. I wouldn't want to try it, as a crosswind would definitely spoil your day.

A final comment related to the cost of the project which was around £40m, £16m of which was funded by the Commissioners with a 30 year loan. I guess they have a captive audience to fund their borrowing when it rains.

David Soul

7th to 16th June, European Tour - France and Germany

This year's FFA tour was split into three parts – Part 1 was to see the Somme WW1 battlefields, Part 2 was a visit to the European Parliament in Strasbourg and Part 3 was a factory visit to Amazone near Osnabruck.

It all started with a hunt meet at home in February 2012. Godfrey and Katie Bloom were at the meet and as you do with Godfrey, being an MEP, you soon get onto the subject of UKIP and politics and he boldly said "Why not come to the European Parliament in Strasbourg and see what goes on". So I even more boldly suggested that we could make it an FFA visit, which he agreed would be quite fun.

Then in July 2012 at Driffield show, having become the proud owner of an Amazone Pantera sprayer, I was talking to Adrian Winnett, the UK General Manager. We went through the same self invitation process, which Adrian agreed would be do-able and they would pay for the overnight stay.

Finally a suggestion was made at a Committee meeting that we should do a Battlefield visit as a two day meeting. I thought at the time that these three suggestions would make an interesting and varied tour, so I volunteered to coordinate it.

From the start it was intended to link this two day meeting with a full tour so that those that couldn't or wouldn't carry on for another week, could return home whilst the hardcore tourers stretched their wings and carried on. In the end we had a total of 55 participants doing 20 different combinations of the tour! Some just Albert, some just Osnabruck, some missing Albert etc, etc.

The original plan was to contact Nigel Dunkley, who will be remembered by those on a German trip to Berlin a few years ago as a very enthusiastic military historian, to conduct us round the Battlefields. He was an early faller in the Plan through a health scare, but when I casually mentioned this to Godfrey he jumped up and down and said that this is his pet subject and please could he lead us round. He explained that UKIP people are passionate about such things and appreciate more than most how we sacrificed so many lives to halt the German's advances first by the Kaiser, then Hitler and now we are in danger of losing, or have already lost control of our country through political persuasion.

So, the scene was set and with Godfrey's enthusiasm, he offered me the services of his personal assistant, Laure Ferrari, who is French and based in Strasbourg. She would help with the hotels and logistics at our chosen bases in Albert (for the Somme) and Strasbourg. I also gave a rough idea to Amazone of what we would like to see and do in Osnabruck and through their Communications Administrator, Keisha Blow in Doncaster, we had a team of which I was chief delegator and had very little to do other than coordinate.

Part 1 – Albert

Friday 7th June 2013 saw 44 participants, 3 UKIP MEPs and Miss Ferrari gather at Albert. The airfield is a huge Marie Celeste airfield. After landing we thought we would have a leisurely afternoon sat in the usual excellent restaurant found at French airfields and gather up our gang. However, everything seemed locked and deserted apart from a fireman who showed us the gate and fortunately a sole taxi, no doubt organised by Miss Ferrari.

Travelling the short distance into Albert, we passed an Airbus factory, originally the home of Potez aircraft, where we presume they make Airbus cockpits as one is displayed at the factory entrance. The Tour's official start was with a 30 minute briefing by Godfrey. He explained about the mental attitudes in 1914 were to preserve the Empire, and all those that joined up in 1914 were volunteers. Albert was chosen as a base for our visit because this part of the Western Front is only within a few miles of the hotel. We were particularly focused on the so called Battle of the Somme which started on 1st July 1916 and was one of the bloodiest military operations ever recorded with more than 1 million casualties by 18th November that year.

The Battlefields tour started next morning with a visit to the



Roger Bell reminiscing about his Territorial days when he used one of these

Musee Somme 1916, the Trench Museum which is all underground and very atmospheric. Then it was onto the Thiepval Memorial where Godfrey, being involved in the British Army himself and a tactician showed his huge in depth knowledge of this horrific battle and war.

We were then to encounter the start of our own battle of the bulge with the first of many fantastic meals. In fact Roger Bell commented that this was a gastronomic tour.

After lunch we made our way to the Beaumont-Hammel Canadian Memorial where Godfrey had arranged a Canadian guide to take us through the Newfoundlanders section of the Front. At the time, Newfoundland was a Dominion and not part of Canada. This preserved battlefield bought by the people of Newfoundland in 1921, comprises 74 acres and is the scene where in 30 minutes almost the entire regiment was wiped out. Such were the horrors of this war and the new technology in the form of machine guns, barbed wire and gas.

We finished our day at the Ulster Tower which is a memorial to the men of the 36th Ulster Division.

Sunday 9th June started with an introduction to the leader of the UKIP party, Nigel Farage. Nigel is also a Battlefields expert and has conducted many tours in the past. In fact, this is how



Nigel Farage, Laure Ferrari and Godfrey Bloom



Nigel Farage telling us about the 1st July 1916

and where Nigel and Godfrey first met. Nigel's approach to relating the stories is different to Godfrey's and he relates things in a more personal and human way than Godfrey's tactical and military recount.

He took us to the Lochnagar crater. Unbelievably, tunnels were dug long distances across no mans land through solid chalk, in silence, in order to place huge quantities of explosives underneath the German trenches. In this case 27 tonnes of ammonal were detonated at 07:28 on the 1st July along with several other mines, which was the start of the Battle of the Somme. The huge crater is preserved and measures 300 feet across and 70 feet deep.

We then went to Delville Wood where the South African Infantry Brigade were engaged. The wood was obliterated but has been reconstructed complete with a remarkable memorial and museum.

The day had to be finished with another French lunch which lasted a good part of the afternoon. It was then out with the iPads and a desperate search for a decent forecast for our flight to Strasbourg.

Part 2 – Strasbourg

Monday 10th June was a reasonable day at Albert, but not a good forecast en route. However, it seemed that it was flyable and everyone decided to leave on the bus back to the Marie Celeste. Mysteriously a secretary was on hand to accept the landing and parking fees which totalled £44 per aircraft. The trouble is that both her and a colleague, who she had to call in, didn't have much of a clue how to operate the computer, nor the card machine, so the process took at least an hour for our one block payment.

After a bit of a messy going on with an inefficient ATC, the ones returning back to the UK went off in reasonable weather, whilst the 12 aircraft with 24 pob heading south ran into grott around Metz and finished up at 4 different airfields. Strasbourg Neuhof itself wasn't too bad, but it required a bit of IMC work (oh I forgot, that isn't recognised by EASA and certainly not outside the UK) to get there.

As always, Flying Farmers are very resilient and all met, including our German adopted FFA non member, Werner, at dinner



that night at Chateau d'Ille. Miss Ferrari had arranged this hotel at a huge discount which made it reasonable by Strasbourg prices, especially when the Parliament is sitting.

We had purposely not organised any events for the two flying days because of such eventualities and it certainly paid off, as no one was put under pressure or deadline other than to get there sometime during the day.

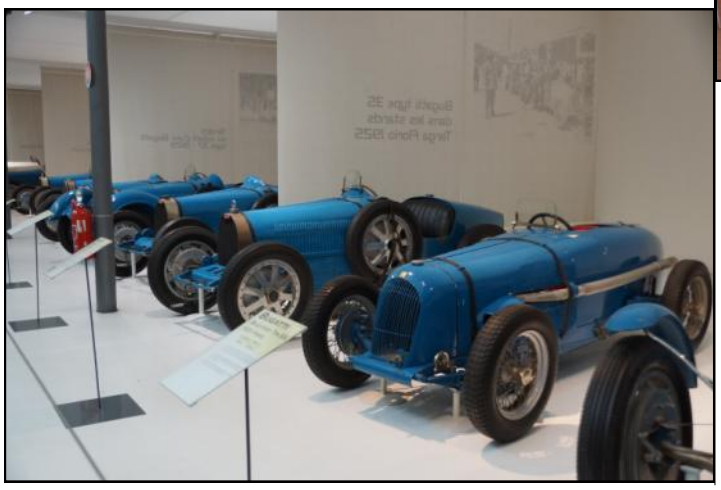
Tuesday 11th June started off with a very relaxing and scenic cruise down the canals of Strasbourg. Apart from the beautiful wooden framed buildings overhanging the canals one of the highlights was when we went passed the European Parliament buildings, who should appear on the overhead walkway but Godfrey on official duty pretending to do a moon at us. Very cleverly organised Miss Ferrari!

Yet another gastronomic lunch was consummed before a few enjoyable hours taking in the delights of Strasbourg then taking the tram (another FFA first) to the European Parliament. The building is built in the round, mainly glass and ultra modern with an open atrium in the middle. After going through security checks, we went up to the high level viewing gallery to watch and hear with headsets with English translation, the debate going on about minor and boring details of the Schengen Agreement. It was the sort of stuff where you soon loose the will to live, giving time to count how many of the 785 seats were unoccupied – the answer 744! What fascinated me more was the skill of the interpreters who have to listen and translate on the fly. Sometimes they stumbled for a couple of seconds and then had to work hard to catch up again.

After a flavour of this (my opinion) huge expensive white elephant (after all, why do we need a European parliament when every country has their own) we met up with Stuart Agnew UKIP MEP and Norfolk farmer, in a well equipped room with computers and projectors which didn't work, to be given a very good presentation of the workings of the EU politics. This more than confirmed my own opinion that we are being hung drawn and quartered by treaties, directives and legislation from a Union that is extremely diverse and doesn't even speak the same language.

It did seem a bit like a UKIP party political broadcast, but every statement rang true. Just to make a change, we finished the day at La Maison Kammerzell with another excellent evening meal.

Wednesday 12th June entailed an hour's bus journey to Mulhouse to see the Schlumpf Collection of cars. The story behind this extraordinary collection is an article in itself, but basically two brothers who had a successful woollen mill business started collecting cars post war, particularly Bugattis. The woollen trade however started going downhill with the advent of man made materials, so they converted one of the woollen factories into a place to keep their collection and to maintain them. Remarkably, this was done in total secrecy until the business got into serious financial straits and couldn't pay the workforce. They broke into this factory and discovered the collection whilst the brothers fled to Switzerland. The French government commandeered the collection as their taxes weren't being paid and created the National Automobile Museum which opened to the public in 1982.



As you enter the museum, you have to go through a long dark passage, but as you go through the door it is one of those OMG moments as this huge collection of over 500 cars is suddenly before you, and displayed in this ornate building with old fashioned street lights on every pillar.

We were conducted by this knowledgeable French woman called Marie, who was so expressive that it got on your wick and eventually most of the gang drifted off to do their own thing. However, the collection warranted much more time than we had as we had another lunch booked in an idyllic little village called Ottrott.

After another beautifully prepared and presented lunch with the wine flowing, it was time for a wine tasting! Now, the Flying Farmers have been on many a wine tasting, but this one seemed so much better and more personal as it was conducted by one of the family Vonville who made it interesting and entertaining in their cellar.

Werner took this opportunity to find a leaf and amused us and the Vonville family with his German, French and British national tunes. At this point, we had to say goodbye to Laure Ferrari who we had all fallen in love with. She worked very hard for us and made the tour run like silk. Thanks Laure.

Back in Strasbourg, we had a free night to find our own eating places – as if we really needed it!

Part 3 – Osnabruck

Thursday 13th June was a good day for flying. Our destination was Osnabruck Atterheide airport which is a small airfield on the outskirts of the city, not to be confused with the international Munster Osnabruck. But first we had to pay the landing fee at Neuhof, which in typical club style was covered by a couple of FFA caps.



The one and a half hour flight was broken by a quick low level run down the Sorpe and Mohne Dams which were on track and had to be celebrated as it was the 70th anniversary of Operation Chastise otherwise known as the Dambusters Raid. When Werner was questioned about the damage done at the time, he just shrugged his shoulders and said things were back to normal within a week.

Atterheide turned out to be a delightful airfield. Efficient, well

maintained, with fuel and a good restaurant. Before we left the UK, Amazone confirmed that they would cover all our costs for the three days with them which was extremely generous. We were also surprised to find Reinhold Schirmbeck, the Amazone Export Manager waiting for us at the airfield, complete with lunch already prepared and paid for, as well as a bus. None of this was expected as I said that we would meet with Amazone at the hotel.

Then, when it came to dinner they excelled themselves again with a fabulous buffet in a conference room at the hotel. Here we met Sven or rather Dr Dutzi who was there to make sure that all our needs were met.

Friday 14th June and we were met by Simon Brown and Adrian Winnett who are the top two Amazone men in the UK as well as Keisha Blow who had co-ordinated the visit. They had taken a late flight out from Stansted the night before after finishing at the Cereals event in the afternoon. We were taken by bendy bus (another FFA first) to the Gaste Factory close by to have an official welcome. We were led through an impressive show room to a conference room where Simon Brown gave a presentation on Amazone from the formation of the company by Heinrich Dreyer to the fourth generation of the family today, who is Christian Dreyer.

As it happens 2013 is the 130th anniversary of the company and also the 50th anniversary of Amazone UK. Later in the day we were to meet with Klaus Dreyer, the third generation family member. He is still keeping an eye on things and knew exactly who we were and what we were doing.

Simon then led us out to the test track where a trailed sprayer and a Pantera were demonstrated for us. It was mighty impressive the way the tractor was being thrown about across the purpose built rough track, whilst the boom remained at a constant height. Many a sprayer would have been digging in at the tips and probably have dropped off the machine under those circumstances.



A factory tour followed where we were led round all areas to see how they make nearly all components for a huge range of fertilizer spreaders, sprayers, drills and cultivators including the plastic extrusion components and even hydraulic rams. We were also told that an Amazone plough is imminent as well. Two little points made me happy. One was that we were kitted up with an excellent ear piece system which allowed us to hear every knowledgeable word that Simon said and secondly there wasn't any health and safety for us. No glasses, hard hats, jackets and no keeping within the yellow line. A breath of fresh air compared to some factory visits.

After lunch in the canteen we moved a few miles down the road to the Leeden factory to see the large sprayers being built and tested as well as the new Panteras being assembled.

Everyone was mightily impressed with Simon's endless knowledge of every component of every machine. He has worked for the company for over 30 years and simply knows everything there is to know about Amazone.

Our final visit of the day was to the farm of Hermann Helmich (who didn't speak a word of English) at Westerkappein, which is where Amazone do crop trials with different fertilizer applications and different cultivation techniques. Amazone have built up a history on this site over many years.



Peter Gale and Robert Knapton

We then had a barbeque on the farm and plenty of German beer to swill it down. Before departing, John Golden gave the vote of thanks, translated by Simon Brown. As soon as Hermann open his present as a token of our appreciation - which was a bottle of whiskey, he started speaking English!

Saturday 15th June. Today we bussed about an hour to the north of Osnabruck to a small town called Loningen. A couple of kilometres outside the town, the Gebrüder Groβ, (the Gros brothers) who within the space of about 14 years, have built up a huge contracting business. They also run a 'muck exchange', carting slurry and muck from stock farms without land to arable farms. They also use slurry, maize and some corn in their 5MW biogas plant, one of the biggest farm installations in Germany.

Not only do they get paid for the electricity produced, but also for the heat captured from the huge generators which is piped to Loningen to heat most of the official and public buildings. When the heat isn't needed in summer, it heats the town swimming pool.

One of our members commented, after viewing the huge machinery, that they no doubt heat the bank as well, keeping the bank manager warm!



Showing extreme hospitality, the brothers had converted the workshop into something resembling a wedding reception. There was a free bar inside and a barbeque. The mayor of the town, who they have a good relationship with, was in attendance and spoke to us – although I'm not sure what he was selling. William Procter gave a vote of thanks and as we made our way back to the bus, the drinks kept flowing and we were still being plied with schnapps and beer as we boarded the bus. In fact they brought a crate of beer onto the bus and halted our departure until we had consumed some more.

The meeting had gone on far longer than planned, but there was just time for a quick look at the attractive town centre in Osnabruck before once again sitting down for our final meal at a micro brewery and three storey restaurant called Rampendahl.

We presented some bottles to the Amazone staff which was small appreciation for all they had done for us. Roz and I were also presented with some gifts which were very gratefully received, but not wholly deserved as the donkey work had been done by Godfrey Bloom, Laure Ferrari, Keisha Blow and the Amazone crew.

Sunday 16th June. A reasonable forecast for the journey home and another landing fee consisting of 1 cap – the last. In typical German efficient style, the director of the airfield had the foresight to get the federal police to the airfield for us so we didn't have to land at a customs airfield to clear the Schengen area to return home.

Thanks to all for coming and making an extremely happy tour. No doubt helped by the free flowing wine and sumptuous meals. As Roger Bell said – a gastronomic tour!

Paul Stephens

13th June , Agrovista

The forecast BECMG 2109/2112 9999 SCT020 did not materialise and low cloud and poor visibility persisted all morning at Leicester airfield. 16 members in 9 cars elected to make the trip by road. At the last minute, with new avionics to rival an airliner, our chairman emerged from the heavy overcast. We were taken by bus just across the road to the Co-operative Farms' Staughton Estate Farm where Agrovista have a dedicated trials centre.

On the screen as we arrived a welcome slide sporting our logo and name had been cheekily amended with "Flying" neatly crossed out of Flying Farmers Association and "Driving" written in above!

The farm manager, Robin Nurse gave a presentation about the farm. The Staughton Estate was purchased by the Co-op in 1919.





At that time there was a strong emphasis to supply the Co-operative shops, clearly a pioneer of what was to become known as "vertical integration". Although this ideal waned in intervening years it is now as strong as ever, with the Co-op acquiring the Somerfield supermarket chain in 2009. The farm is 1588ha including a large part of the airfield with 146ha in environmental schemes and 22ha dedicated to Agrovista trials. In addition to traditional arable farming activities they also run their "Farm to Fork" initiative which hosts 120 school visits per year with pupils aged 6-12 years old; they also pay for the transport to bus the children in! They also have 20 beehives supplemented by 120 imported hives producing 2700kg honey in 2011. The Co-op Farms have an initiative called Habitat heroes; each Co-op farm concentrates on a particular theme or species e.g. otters, water voles and owls; Staughton's speciality is pollinator species, a good synergy with the bees. They also undertake wild bird monitoring in conjunction with Leicester University and local farmers and volunteers. Robin went on to state his challenges that the Co-op expects to face in the future and they were : reduction in CAP payments, the environmental profile (eg the food vs. fuel debate), EU Ag-chem policy and withdrawal of actives, an ageing workforce and climatic volatility. The mission statement of the Co-farms was "Profit driven with strong ethical values" I think all present were impressed how they set about it.

Craig Morgan, the trials manager for Agrovista then told us about the company and its commitment to trailing. He stressed that Agrovista, as a distributor of agrochemicals, was committed to trialling to add value to their sales by providing timely and relevant advice to its customers. Current areas of research are grass weeds, establishment of OSR, spray application techniques, aerial imagery with drones, cover crops and companion plants. Tony Fisher asked a question about Avadex which prompted an impromptu but very interesting and topical discussion about blackgrass control. As far as pre-ems are concerned, Agrovista encourage their customers to "drill, roll and spray" even if its dry. Avadex is best applied 10 days after pre-ems to extend activity and sensitise blackgrass ahead of Atlantis. They have found that the spray application technique is hugely important to the efficacy of the spray with fine sprays through forward and down alternating nozzles being the best arrangement.

Mark Hemmant, the Agrovista technical manager, having been somewhat drawn into the blackgrass debate, then talked about the work on companion plants in OSR.

In their trials, these are drilled between the rows of OSR using a second hopper on a subsoiling seeder. The species involved are : Common vetch – var. NACRE, Berseem clover – var. TABOR

and Red vetch – var. BINGO. These plants naturally die away over the winter, The benefits include reduction of flea beetle and, although the plants are not in the ground long enough for N-fixing to begin, reduction of N fertiliser through breakdown of the plants in the spring. More than once, Mark has been accused by organic farmers of pinching their ideas to which he agrees wholeheartedly while pointing out that, unfortunately, they cannot pinch any of ours! Agrovista have also been doing trials on precision drilling of OSR, work which has clearly demonstrated the importance of correct seed rate in wide rows where the number of plants established per meter run (10-12) is far more important than plants per square meter.

We then went out to see the trials sprayer which was based on an Agribuggy. It can apply 4 different mixes across a 12m boom at conventional spray speeds. It therefore has the flexibility of a man without the disadvantage of spraying by hand at 3.7kph, a speed which is not representative of farm practice. The boom had been populated with a wide range of different nozzle types along with a comparison with and without adjuvants to show us the effect of these things. It was quite obvious how such choices are vitally important to properly deliver the product to target.

After a very adequate buffet lunch provided by Agrovista, some members went off on a tour of the grainstores while the rest returned to the airport. Since all but one had driven it was left to the member if they wanted to visit the nearby Leicester Space Centre, a museum of the history of space exploration, manned and unmanned.

Andrew Cragg

30th June - 3rd July, Northumberland

31 members and guests arrived at Eshott Airfield by road and air on Sunday afternoon. Most of the flyers had battled through severe turbulence, but all were in their usual good form and all within the appointed time albeit the last arrival only had two minutes to spare.

We were welcomed by Maureen, Richard's wife, with tea and coffee together with delicious home baking.

A short coach drive took us to our hotel, which was only 18 months old, an upmarket Premier Inn type, built by the Duke of Northumberland to accommodate coach parties to his wife's garden. Very comfortable and can be recommended.

Our first visit on Monday was to view the new and now famous Alnwick gardens, our President was not able to be present but we were delighted that Mathew Walgate {Dicks son] and his wife could join us.

We were met at the Garden by the Head gardener for a conducted tour, this service cost us the princely sum of £250, we could have had the Duchess for £2000 but this seemed a bit extravagant.

The Head gardener explained the background to the garden which had originally been laid out by Capability Brown in 1750 but fell in to disrepair after WW2.

The current Duchess embarked on the gardens recreation in 1997, with an initial £3million from the estate's coffers.

Sadly they were no UK designers who had the expertise to implement the Duchess's aspirations; she eventually employed a Belgian team Jacques and Peter Wirtz whose speciality was living green architecture combined with water features.

The garden was opened to the public in 2001 but it is only now that the total concept is coming to fruition, with huge live Hornbeam covered structures and breathtaking water features.

The garden also has some traditional features such as a rose garden with 3000 types an herbaceous garden with paths shaded with fruit trees, and a blossom garden with 300 cherry trees and 600,000 tulips.

More quirky is a poison garden demonstrating everyday poisonous plants, including cannabis and opium; I did notice that some of our party seemed a bit more stimulated than usual that evening.

The garden also includes what is claimed to be the largest tree house in the world incorporating a first class restaurant.

To date the garden has cost £28 million and requires a further £16 million to complete, it now belongs to a charitable trust, who among its many aims to help disadvantaged children particularly those living in an urban environment.

The whole enterprise is miles away from what Capability Brown must have had in mind, but it is undoubtedly a success, with 720,000 visitors last year, an adult ticket is £13.75.

Mike Ashmole

The day of our visit to The Lakes Free Range Egg Company dawned grey and a bit drizzly fully vindicating our trusty organiser's decision not to fly to Carlisle but to go by coach. Apart from not having to fly in grotty weather, this had 2 added attractions: our driver was a Geordie keen on Hadrian's Wall (so a visit en route was a must) and, secondly, we travelled along the Military Road past what used to be RAF Ouston (now the Albemarle Barracks). We both used to fly from Ouston, he as a CCF cadet with the Air Experience Flight, and I with the UAS in the 60s, so it was a journey down memory lane.

After a fine lunch south of Carlisle, we made our way to the Lakes Free Range Egg Company. Sadly, David Brass, whom I had met last year at a UAS reunion, had been called away on urgent business, but his wife Helen and members of staff ably filled the breach and gave us first the background. David had studied agriculture at Newcastle University but was diverted into aviation by the UAS and went on to fly the Harrier in 3 operational theatres. Grounded by a medical problem, he returned to the family farm just west of Penrith and developed the egg business.

The ethos is quite simple: to generate and supply ethically produced free range eggs without harming the environment. Moreover, they have a policy of integrity and of ensuring that the local community is not marred in any way by the business. Helen, in fact, said that a helicopter had arrived at the plant a short while ago and the villagers had assumed David was buying one. It took a while to scotch that rumour so what will they think when his airstrip is complete and he has a light twin to operate?

The majority of the eggs are produced by local farmers to the Brass standard. All the hens are allowed to roam freely under a safe canopy of tree cover protecting them from predators and encouraging them to roam. The eggs come to the packing plant having been part sorted for quality by the producers, they are then graded and packed by the most advanced equipment around although I wasn't able to see this working as by the time the second group was shown round all the eggs had been dealt with. However, I think we were all intrigued to learn about their diet, especially the addition of marigold extract (lutein) which has many health benefits for

humans.

After the vote of thanks, it was back into the coach for a pleasant doze en route to Alnwick and dinner. It was mentioned to Helen that we'd come back again when the airstrip was ready. She laughed.

Richard Butler

On the final morning of the Northumberland tour we visited Embleton Mill Farm at the village of Embleton near Alnwick. The family farm is the third generation home of the Robertson's, David and Fred together with sons James, George and Tom.

David's Father was the farmer who brought the first Limousin Cattle into the UK from France.

They run a mixed enterprise of 900 acres in a ring block, 615 ac being Arable, 64 ac temporary grass and the remaining 224 ac being permanent pasture.

The 615 ac arable have a rotation of OSR, 1st winter wheat for seed, 2nd winter wheat commercial or spring barley for seed followed by winter barley as an entry into OSR.

The arable soils are light to medium loam and free draining.

The Suckler cow herd is made up of 73 crossbred Limousin X Freisian cows and 3 Limousin Bulls. The bulls go out on June 14th for 8 weeks to keep a tight calving pattern.

The cows are wintered inside and in more recent years are fed on straw to keep the cows in the ideal condition for calving and avoid over big calving losses.

As soon as the calves are soundly mothered up, the cows and calves are moved outside to grass to prevent joint ill and scouring problems associated with long housing.

The calves are sold as yearlings to make room for the maximum number of cows.

The weather seemingly being the first day of summer we loaded onto a tractor trailer for a farm tour leaving most of the ladies with David's wife Fred for an alternate tour.

We saw several fields of cows with calves at foot, they all looked well, the calves showing some strong beef conformation with plenty of growth to come as the cows were milking well on the abundance of grass from the wet winter and spring. On the highest part of the farm we could see the North Sea and the coastal Castles.

The downside of being 2 miles from the sea was the short harvesting days as sometimes the sea mist didn't clear until lunchtime.

The crops looked well being very even, clean and seemed to be the same growth stage as our crops further south. 6 metre grass margins were used in places together with some plots of pollen & nectar mixes.

The Ladies joined Fred to visit her diversification project. A farm building nearer the village has been converted into a gift shop with a coffee and cakes counter. The shop stocked some unusual gifts from local arts and crafts suppliers.

There was also a renovated holiday cottage for lettings.

Coffee was enjoyed by all before departing to the coast for some exercise along the beach.

After a tour of the grain store and cattle facilities we assembled for a vote of thanks to David, Fred and their family for a most interesting visit. The farm was obviously well managed and David's attention to detail was clearly evident and made a lovely ending to our 3 days in Northumberland.

We then departed to a local pub for an excellent buffet lunch before retuning to Eshott airfield to be reunited with our aircraft for the flight home.

Our thanks to Richard and Maureen Lawrence for organizing a very enjoyable 3 days.

Peter Gale

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 0207 902 7800 or email wman@haywards.net.

Finally, it is worth noting that the FFA Committee are so concerned about liability claims that the FFA will be unable to organise an event at any strip that does not have this or similar cover, for fear of exposing itself and in turn its members to any liability claim. Under certain circumstances, the FFA will pay a year's premium if a member will allow their strip to be used for an event.

Please quote your Flying Farmers membership number when you call.

Flying Farmers Association Limited

Detailed Income and Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31 March 2013

	2013		2012	
	£	£	£	£
Income				
Subscription and entrance fees		10,391		10,288
Surplus on sale of stock of clothing		(47)		55
		10,344		10,343
Administrative expenses				
Insurance	1,421		1,355	
Committee expenses	716		832	
Website costs	949		148	
Membership booklet	-		1,614	
Newsletters - cost of production (net)	3,235		4,381	
Charitable donations	1,200		1,450	
Sundry	45		42	
AGM costs	1,110		1,725	
Accountancy fees	276		174	
		(8,952)		(11,721)
Other interest receivable and similar income				
Bank interest receivable		461		484
Surplus/(deficit) on ordinary activities before taxation		1,853		(894)

Flying Farmers Association Limited

(Registration number: 01166733)

Balance Sheet at 31 March 2013

	Note	2013 £	2012 £
Current assets			
Stocks of clothing	3	1,259	1,018
Debtors	4	1,317	1,125
Cash at bank and in hand		31,920	29,472
		34,496	31,615
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	5	(1,392)	(272)
Net assets		33,104	31,343
Reserves			
Fly-in reserves	7	1,848	1,848
Reserves	7	31,256	29,495
Accumulated surplus		33,104	31,343