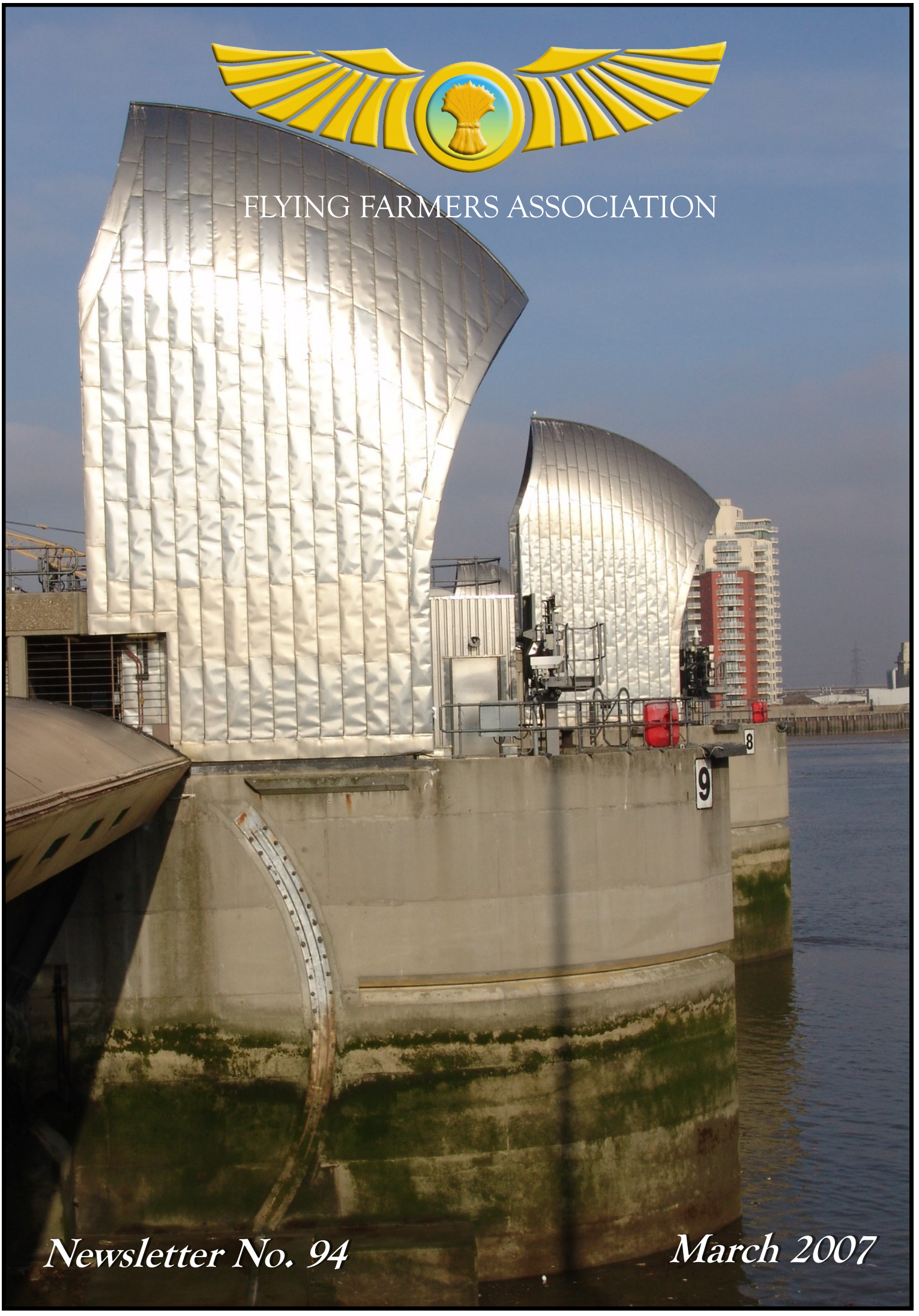


FLYING FARMERS ASSOCIATION

Newsletter No. 94

March 2007

Opening Thoughts

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Cover photograph;

Taken by Roz Stephens at the Thames Barrier meeting in February

Chairman's Message

Spring and summer are coming and the thought of lighter evenings and mornings is most welcome, with the hope of many good flying days in 2007.

Pressure of time recently forced me to make a night flight into France. Flying on a fine night adds a new dimension to a journey and at 2500 feet it was most enjoyable. Granville airfield was deserted, but three quick transmissions on the radio bring on the runway lights and you just help yourself, park the aircraft, walk to the security gate, punch in the code and you are very much in France. We had booked Customs, but as usual they didn't bother to come out.

I am reminded of perhaps the most memorable night flight that I have ever made, from Stavanger to Bournemouth VFR. I was in Norway on business, and as is sometimes the case nearly everything that could go wrong had gone wrong, so I decided at 1700 hrs in the dark that I wouldn't spend another night there - I would go home. The met was no significant weather, light winds, but towering cumulus up to 20,000 ft. We filled the tanks full and were soon off the ground and climbing to FL100. The moon was full and it was easy to see the beautiful white cumulus clouds and steer a path around them - well, easy for a while, because our only means of navigation then was the VOR, tracking an outbound radial for as long as you had reception, but with more than 150 NM before you could pick up the next, UK, station. Between the two you had to rely on dead reckoning, timing your departure from your chosen heading and trying to return to it as soon as possible. As we looked down on the North Sea we were amazed by how many lights we saw - fishing boats, ferries, cruise liners and, presumably, support vessels for the many oil rigs. With the full moon shining on the sea the rigs themselves looked splendid. It was November 6th, and because the 5th had been wet we saw bonfires and fireworks all the way from Humberside to Bournemouth. The flight took four hours forty minutes. I was pleased to be home again.

The Events Secretary has got our year off to an excellent start with visits to the AAIB and the Thames Barrier. I was particularly impressed with the AAIB visit – it is one that all pilots should make. It is very sobering when you see what happens when mistakes are made. During the tour we were taken to the department that de-codes black boxes as fitted to airliners and military aircraft; next door to it is the department that de-codes GPS units. Did you know that your fairly simple GPS holds details of your last three flights? In the case of the mid-air collision at Moreton in Marsh the paths of the two aircraft were downloaded and it was easy to see what had happened. Be careful, this evidence could be used against you if you were accused of a zone infringement.

Another warning: the use of 123.45 as a chat frequency is illegal. The CAA monitors the frequency for illegal use and our organisation is one that they are keeping their eye on. You have been warned.

I hope to see you during the summer events. Happy flying.

John Golden

Editor's Notes

As I write this, we are threatened with increasing fuel tax, changing C of A rules (see David Corbett's article in this issue), uncertainty about new EASA regulations, petitions being carried out to object about airfield planning, individual councils rating some strips or hangars or both, big brother wanting to keep an eye on us via Mode S and as John says above, they are monitoring for illegal use of the radio. Most of these will entail extra cost for no apparent gain. Don't you just feel like getting the aeroplane out, switching all the magic boxes off and just enjoy flying around minding your own business apart from checking on what your neighbours are doing.

It might not go down well with some, but I fly quite legally from my strip to Mallorca with no radio and nothing other than a flight plan and a map. In good VFR, that's the most enjoyable flying with no one telling you what to do!

Paul Stephens

Committee Members

Dick Walgate	President	01472 371203
John Golden	Chairman	01725 552384
Paul Stephens	Secretary	01944 738281
Andrew Cragg	Treasurer	01303 874251
Mike Cuttell	Events Secretary	01242 236770
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Anthony Kedros	Committee Member	01295 720876
Mike Ashmole	Committee Member	01738 627622

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David Corbett would like to apologise for an incorrect caption that appeared on one of the photographs in the article about his trip to Poland in the December 2006 newsletter.

Superimposed on the photo of Robs Lamplough's Spitfire were two captions; the caption which read "Five of the eight aircraft in this picture belong to FFA members" should have appeared with this photograph. Only four of the aircraft in the photo of Robs' Spitfire were FFA aircraft - including the Spitfire and the PC12!

Committee Meeting

The FFA Committee held their biennial meeting after the Thames Barrier visit on February 5th. The venue was appropriately The Farmers Club in London and all were present. Apart from the usual Committee matters, the following points were discussed;

1) The Events Secretary will issue stick on fabric name tags at events, not only to help new members but also to jog the memories of the more established ones who can't remember people's names!
2) Due to some events being oversubscribed, it was decided from now onwards, that guests and non members will only be accepted if the allocation for that event isn't filled by the closing date. This doesn't happen at all events, but priority must go to members when numbers are restricted.
3) The Secretary receives a number of enquiries from members (and others) regarding airstrip problems such as planning and rating. Although he feels that the FFA should be the authority on farm strip problems, he realizes that the Association can't give professional advice, so he ends up giving personal views. It was thought that the best way around this problem would be for the Secretary to build up a database of member's problems and solutions so that if a member poses a question, he could maybe be referred to another member with a similar problem to share ideas.
4) A number of new applicants were put before the Committee who, by the black balling rule in the Articles, will reject any applicants who they consider don't fit the parameters laid down. This means that if any 2 Committee members black ball an applicant, they cannot become a member. Two such applicants were black balled on this occasion - one was an ex-member who wanted to rejoin, but his motives were questionable. The other was not thought to be a farmer and didn't have enough land capable of landing an aircraft on (the two basic requirements).
5) The next Committee meeting will be held on the 29th June.

Can You Help?

As mentioned above, the Secretary would like to build a database of member's problems and solutions. If you are willing to partake and share your ideas with other members, please either send an email to chix@farmline.com or by fax to 01944 738240.

Recent exchanges on the FFA e-news were about hangar design and rating problems. On both occasions, other member's advice and similar problems proved very useful.

This could be done on an anonymous basis if the issues are contentious or the member doesn't want to be involved any further.

From David Watt

Cumbria Sky Watch pilots have responded to a public appeal from the police. Children are dropping stones off motorway bridges, between J40 (Penrith) and Carlisle J43). Six of us are going to keep an eye on the problem while flying alongside the motorway.

Romania

David Corbett is arranging the European Tour this year to Romania. This is an ambitious project which will entail leading around 14 aircraft and 31 FFA members to a country that won't be used to too many GA visitors.

The tour sets off by meeting at Vilshofen in Germany on the 27th May and finishes on the 8th June at Craiova in Romania. This is Romania's first year in the European Union and our members will be looking closely at how this new member state is adapting to western standards and EU rules and regulations!

A full report will no doubt be written by those on the tour and will be published in the August edition of the newsletter.

Welcome to New Members

Since 1st December 2006, the following have joined

802 Alastair Scott, Nr. Usk, Monmouthshire
803 Mark Mewman, Andover, Hampshire
804 William Knowles, Tiverton, Devon
805 Ian Manley, Chichester, Sussex
806 Mike Falkingham, Driffield, East Yorkshire
807 John Ford, Droitwich, Worcestershire
808 David Morgam, Fishburn Airfield, Co Durham

The total membership now stands at 389

Programme 2007

February 6th	Thames Barrier, London
March 21st	Flour Mills, Cranfield
April 3rd	North Shropshire Agricultural College, Sleap
April 25th	William Mumford's farm, GPS etc, Little Staughton
May 9th	Shuttleworth Collection, Old Warden
End of May/June	Tour of Romania
June 28th	Agricultural visit in the Salisbury area
July 25th	The Tank Museum, Bovington



Wednesday, 21st March - Two Flour Mills

Visit Bowmans Flour Mills at Hitchin in Hertfordshire - a family owned and one of the larger independent millers in the country. Then, at the other end of the technology spectrum visit the recently restored Stotfold Mill in Bedfordshire. Standing by the river Ivel, a water mill has existed on this site for 1000 years.

Cost £20 to Tim Franklin with the tear off slip, to include a buffet lunch, but not the landing at Cranfield Airfield, meeting at 10.00 to 10.30.

Tuesday, 3rd April - Harris Centre, North Shropshire Agricultural College

This new £2.7 million facility specializes in more than 500 examples of animal life. It is an eco friendly centre of teaching. £350,000 has been invested in sustainable technology including biomass, geothermic energy and photovoltaic cells plus an anaerobic digester.

Landing at Sleap, cost will be £18 with SAE to James Holt with two 2nd class stamps for the detailed briefing, to include lunch and transport but not the landing fee.

Wednesday, 25th April - GPS Systems

William Mumford has invited us to his farm for a personal demonstration of GPS and variable rate application systems, including auto-steer. There will be a chance to try tractors yourself after lunch.

Landing will be at Little Staughton. SAE to William with the tear off slip.

Wednesday, 9th May - Old Warden

No introduction needed here. Party split in two, each with a guide. Landing fees have been waived, restaurant on site. Cost £10 for the entry and guide to Mike Cuttell with SAE and slip.

Date TBA - NATS, West Drayton

An opportunity for maximum 6 members who have joined in the last 4 years to visit this fascinating centre incorporating the D & D cell. SAE to Mike Cuttell if interested.

Thursday, 28th June - Salisbury Visit

An opportunity to visit the tallest and possibly the most beautiful cathedral in England, to climb the tower and enjoy the magnificent views.

In the afternoon we will visit Longford Farms, by kind permission of Lord Radnor. They have a suckler herd of 500 cows and followers which are outside all the year. Crops of fodder rape and short-rotation ryegrass are grown to feed them. They also grow approximately 3000 acres of combinable crops; wheat, winter and spring barley, peas and spring OSR. Of interest is that all the crops are direct drilled - no ploughing or cultivation has taken place for the last seven years.

The farm is part of the Earl of Radnor's estate. The Earl has invited us to view the Longford Castle gardens and take tea with him after the farm visit.

The cost will be £25 per head. This will include coach travel, the cathedral and tower visit and lunch.

We are hoping to be able to use one of two local members' strips.

Replies and cheques to John Golden, Middle Chase, Bowerchalke, Salisbury SP5 5LT

Wednesday, July 25th - Bovington Camp, Dorset.

Visit to the Tank Museum. Fly into member David Hawkin's strip then transported by vintage Routemaster bus to the museum. Morning in the museum and then after lunch we have special permission to visit the workshops.

We need to be on the ground by 0930.

Applications please, with an SAE and £25 per head to David Hawkins (to cover entry and transport) by June 25th.

Numbers may have to be limited to members only depending on the response.

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.

Aircraft and Accident Investigation Branch, 6th and 13th December 2006

Due to an extensive new building programme our application was on hold for 12 months. When, finally, they could accept us we were limited to two parties of 20 people, the first on the 6th December 2006 and the second on the 13th. I guessed that this would be heavily subscribed and it was!

Security was pretty tight. The morning began when we were met by their Inspector of Accidents, Julian Firth B.Eng. His aviation career seems to have started at the age of three months in Dakota G-AMPO which he now flies as a display pilot. He also has display authorisation on the DC6 and Pembroke. He also remains current on the Convair 440, Airbus A320, BN2, C404, Dash 8 Q400, Dove and is just doing a PPL H.

As you would imagine, doing the job that they do, Julian is a quiet, disciplined and methodical person who has to cope with some pretty grim scenes at times.



We were ushered into their building, a mixture of offices, laboratories and lecture rooms where he gave us a briefing followed by a film illustrating the scope of their work.

The department employs 57 staff at Farnborough of which 30 are front line people who will work with their counterparts in other countries when the needs arise. Their operations inspectors must understand the parameters surrounding commercial (airline) working practice. Their engineering inspectors have to interpret black boxes and be able to build up a profile of events leading up to an accident and often, using computer models, simulators, of similar aircraft to try to recreate the events leading up to the accident.

Their specialists are drawn from civil and military backgrounds and the aerospace industry. Most have an engineering degree and many of them are qualified pilots. They always deploy if an accident is fatal and that includes overseas.

Their methodology is fascinating. Their ability to determine a conclusion in the majority of investigations is a credit to their skills and teamwork. Reports often have to sought from engine manufacturers, chemists, radio technicians, agronomists, meteorologists, doctors, pathologists etc.. and then it is someone's job to combine all of the feedback which forms the basis of the reports which we all receive in the post.

Interestingly, the AAIB have supremacy over any accident and even have the power to enter a private house if they believe that evidence crucial to their investigation is being withheld.

At lunchtime we adjourned to the Falcon Hotel for an excellent buffet, thanks to Tony and Jean Poulsom who made the arrangements.

After lunch it was time to visit the hangars. Without question the dominating feature was the Lockerbie 747. The re-assembly of the port side on to the household scaffolding had been an incredible feat especially considering the vast area over which the wreckage had been scattered. We were shown where the explosion had occurred and they even know the type and quantity of explosive used.

Either side of a central isle the hangar is divided by tapes and bollards so as to contain the evidential material from each incident. Each one tells a story and our guides were ready to talk us through their findings. There was no blood and gore despite many being fatal. In one corner were the remains of a C404 although you would never have known it. With a single commercial pilot on board it plunged into a Scottish mountain at 1.5 times VNE. Using RAF helicopters they salvaged every piece of that aircraft. How do they know that I asked? Simple answer they weighed the bits. They even established that when it struck the ground it was yawing.

Our experience was a sobering one which will not be easily forgotten and perhaps as a result of what we saw one or two of our party may be spared from becoming exhibits in the black hangar.

These people do a fantastic job under very challenging circumstances. It would be impossible to put a value on their contribution to air safety.

Our thanks to our guides Brian, Julian and Nick and to Anthony Kedros for providing the link.

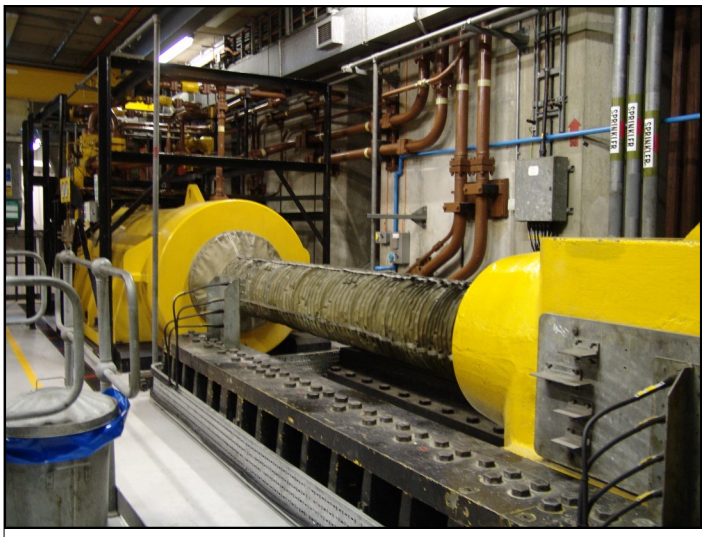
Post Script:- Roger Bell was one of our number on 6th December. He arrived wearing a red lapel badge reading 'Bollocks to Blair'. Our host Julian was slightly upset by this so Roger removed it. At the end of the afternoon I asked Roger to give the vote of thanks, which he did appropriately and somewhat unexpectedly, he said as a token of our appreciation he would like to make a presentation to Julian of ?.....You've guessed it!

Mike Cuttell

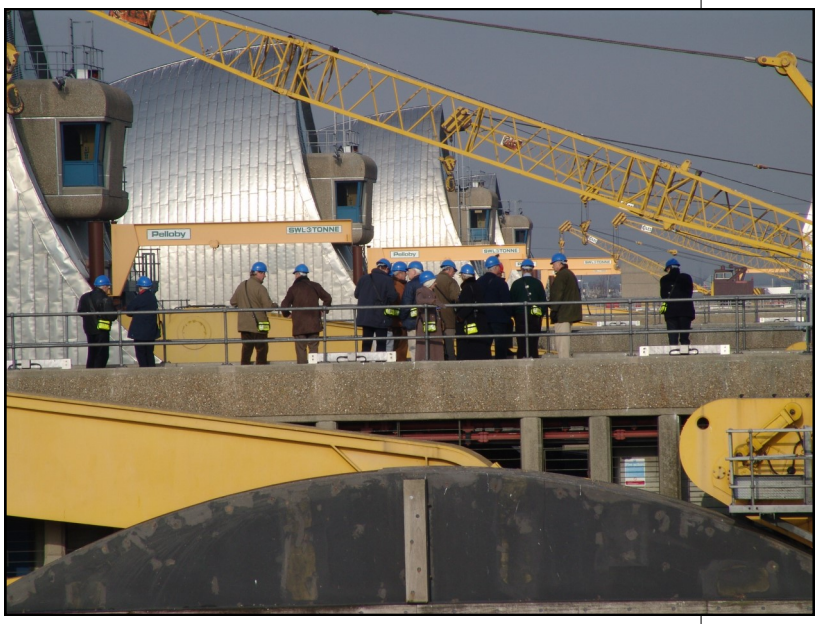
Thames Barrier, 5th February 2007

From the outset this was planned as a non flying visit, so it was somewhat ironical that it was a sunny day as 29 members gathered within sight and sound of London City airport just across the water from where we were standing. Our tour guides wanted us on site by 09.30, which meant a pretty early start and I am delighted to record that everyone, regardless of distance, was on time give or take 5 minutes.

The Thames Barrier has been described as one of the greatest achievements of the 20th century. It was built to protect London which has a history of flooding. In 1236 the water rose so high that people rowed across Westminster Hall. Further flooding occurred in 1663 and 1928, but it was the 1953 tidal surge that finally prompted government to consider drawing up a detailed scheme to prevent a repetition of the 1953 disaster which claimed the lives of 300+ Britons and over 2000 citizens in the Low Countries around Holland.



It was 1962 before government agreed to engage a mathematician named, Sir Herman Bondi, and he carried out the research that resulted in a working plan which was placed before the Greater London Council in 1967.



The present site was chosen because the river was straight at this point thereby minimising the effects of currents and enabling boats to steer a straight course between the piers.

The barrier is 1706ft from bank to bank and it has nine piers which are somewhat reminiscent of an opera house in Australia. There are ten gates, each of the central four have a span of 200ft. In the open position they lie flat on the bed of the Thames. Each gate weighs an astonishing 3200 tons and each one is moved individually. When they are in the closed (upright) position the water level rises 4 – 5ft despite their being a 7inch gap below the gate. When the gates are closed the programme calls for a progressive closing from either side with the central ones to be the last.

Notification has to be given to river users 12 hours ahead but it was sad to learn that there is hardly any shipping to affect these days. One hundred staff are involved in running the operation and the shift runs 24 hours per day, every day, with continuous monitoring of the sea and river levels.

The gates are moved by giant hydraulic rams operating at 2200psi. Eleven thousand volt electric motors provide the motive power. Redundancy was the key to this scheme. Any barrier can be moved by a single ram (although they normally operate as a pair) and if the mains electricity supply fails (and they have two supplies), they have an enormous power house on the south bank containing three generators, any one of which can supply enough power.

This alone is indicative of the seriousness of this project and the implications in the event of failure.

The Barrier cost £460 million when completed in 1984 and the additional defences up and down stream cost an additional £760 million.

It is estimated that without the barrier, if London flooded as predicted the cost could be £30 billion. The barrier has been closed as a defensive measure more than 20 times.

Our thanks go to Roger Vine and Ralph Lambert who answered all our technical questions, led us up and down seven floors, walked us under the bed of the river and ensured that we all wore hard hats and carried gas hoods.

Judging by the number of calls and notes that I have received everyone enjoyed themselves.

Mike Cuttell



Polly's at it again – but she needs our help

In 2001 Polly Vacher MBE flew her Piper Cherokee Dakota solo round the world, with the aim of raising enough money to endow an annual flying scholarship to enable a disabled person to learn to fly. This epic flight included a 16-hour crossing from Hawaii to California. Later she attempted to circumnavigate the world pole-to-pole – she almost made it, but was forced back from the South Pole by bad weather. She was the first woman to fly solo over the North Pole in a single-engine aircraft, the first woman to fly solo in Antarctica in a single-engine aircraft, and the first person to fly solo round the world landing on all seven continents. She has twice crossed the Atlantic solo, has circumnavigated Australia, the USA and Canada, and has made at least 245 parachute jumps!

"Flying Scholarships for the Disabled" is a charity dedicated to helping people with disabilities to discover their true potential through the mental and physical stimulation of learning to fly a light aircraft. The challenges they face and overcome enable them to find new confidence and self esteem in rising above their own personal life difficulties and help them view the future with greater self- assurance. Visit the website www.toreachforthesky.org.uk and you will get some sense of what learning to fly has meant to so many disabled people. As 'light-aviators' ourselves, we share their experience of the exhilaration, freedom, beauty and interest of flying - we know how privileged we are. Imagine what flying must mean to someone whose life has hitherto been cramped by the strictures of disability.

And now Polly has set herself another challenge: to visit every airfield in the Jeppesen UK VFR Manual, this time taking a different disabled person on each leg of the flight. She will be promoting her book "Wings Around the World" each time she lands. Money raised from sponsorship and all royalties from her book will be donated to Flying Scholarships for the Disabled.

We salute Polly's courage, vision, airmanship and huge generosity in giving so much of her time, enthusiasm and money to her cause. What you may not know is that Polly and her husband are members of the Flying Farmers Association. We have a unique opportunity to support what she is doing, if only as an expression of our gratitude that we ourselves have the ability and the means to fly. She is giving us a lead and an inspiration – how can we respond?

I want the FFA to raise at least £10,000 for Polly's charity. If we can afford to fly, we can surely afford to give Polly the value of a tonne of wheat (June price delivered £100). We have 390 members, so could raise something like £39,000. My target should be easily met – and easily exceeded.

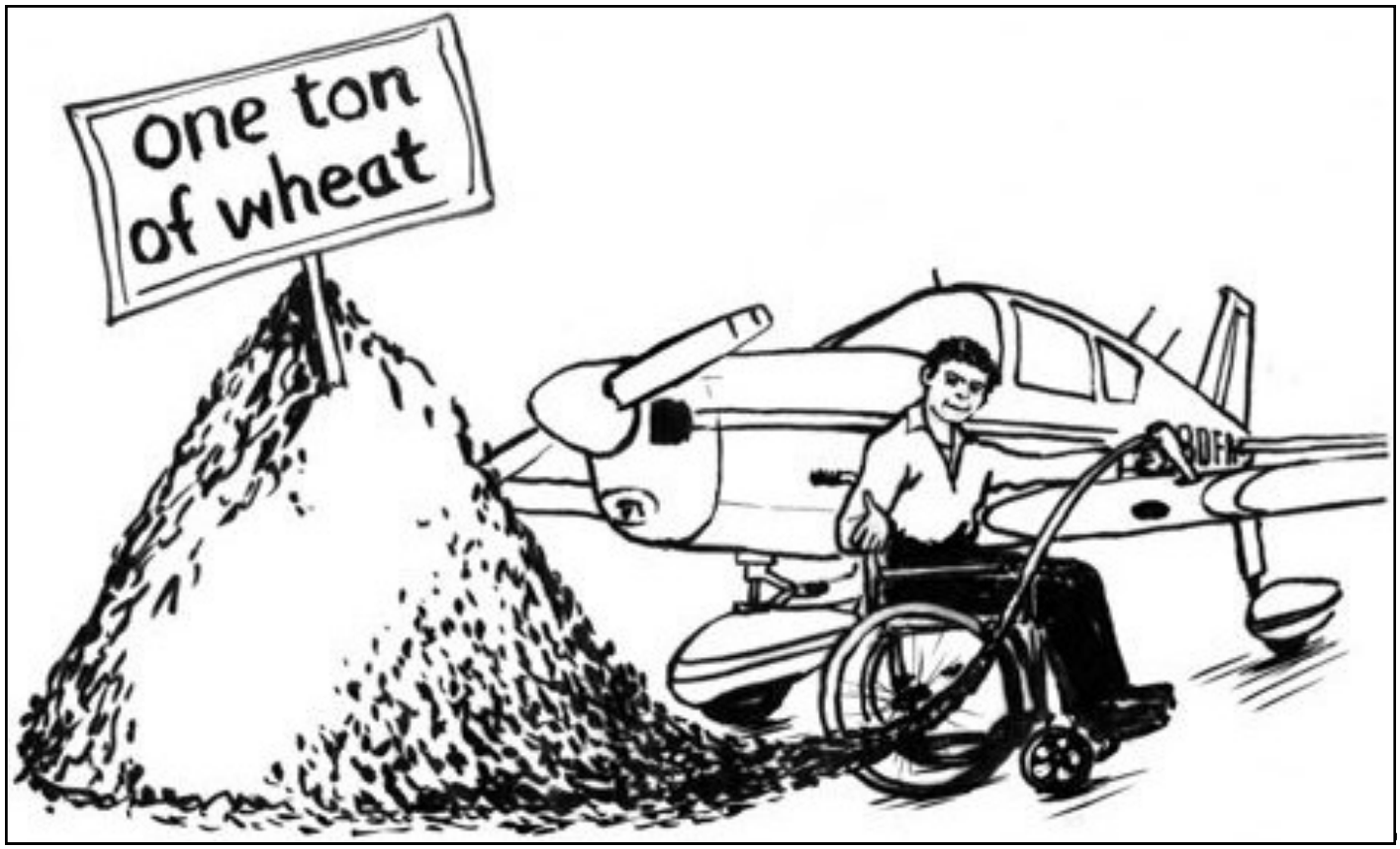
Our treasurer Andrew Cragg has agreed to handle the fund. Cheques should be made payable to the Flying Farmers Association and sent to Andrew at Brooker Farm, Newchurch, Romney Marsh, Kent TN29 0DT. Please remember to identify your gift as being for Polly's fund, either on the envelope or on an enclosed slip.

Neville Stops and I are organising an event at Salisbury on 28th June (details elsewhere in this newsletter). Polly has a hectic schedule for the next three months but will try very hard to be with us at that meeting, when we hope to present her with a cheque from the Association. There are a lot of big names sponsoring the charity, but have they got the big hearts of the Flying Farmers?

Please give generously – let's show what those whingeing farmers can do!

John Golden

Our grateful thanks go to Ron Homes for his drawing. The original will be auctioned on the next AGM in aid of Polly's fund.



Aircraft Certification - Change to EASA Certificates of Airworthiness September 2007 to September 2008

EASA maintenance requirements for aircraft currently on UK Certificates of Airworthiness.

During the period September 2007 to September 2008 all aircraft currently on UK Certificates of Airworthiness will be required to change to EASA Certificates of Airworthiness. Aircraft owners/operators need to be aware of the full implications of this change. The following is a broad outline of the changes that will affect those aircraft, but does not attempt to go into detail by quoting all the various EASA regulations that will regulate the maintenance regime: please note that where, in the text below, a series of dots appear, this is because I have omitted the appropriate reference. I explain why I have done this at the end of this article.

1) EASA Certificates of Airworthiness will be non-expiring.

2) EASA C's of A will need to be validated by the issuance of an Airworthiness Review Certificate (ARC). The ARC can be either an annual or a 3 year ARC.

3) A 3 year ARC can only be issued to an aircraft that is maintained within a "Controlled Environment". A Controlled Environment requires that:

- The continuing airworthiness of an aircraft is continuously *managed* by an appropriately approved and contracted ..... organisation for a minimum of 12 months , and
- Is *maintained* by an appropriately approved Maintenance Organisation (....)
- Can include Pilot/Owner maintenance and maintenance carried out by a ....licensed engineer but limited to the tasks contained in .....

4) The alternative is an "Uncontrolled environment"; in this situation, the continuing airworthiness of an aircraft is managed by an owner or operator in accordance with ..... The following will apply:

- The aircraft is maintained by an appropriately ..... licensed aircraft engineer, except for complex tasks which can only be certified by a ..... approved organisation.
- The owner/operator must contract the services of a ..... organisation once every 12 months.
- That ..... organisation must conduct a full Airworthiness Review (including a physical survey) and when satisfied that the aircraft is airworthy will make a recommendation to the CAA (acting as UK competent authority for EASA) for the issue of an ARC.

5) It is the CAA intention to effect the transition of the documents between 28 September 2007 and 28 September 2008. To facilitate this transition for every EASA aircraft on the UK register, this will require a recommendation to be made to CAA from an appropriate source. On the basis of this recommendation, CAA will issue the new non-expiring EASA C of A, and the initial ARC valid for one year.

6) It is not the intention, in this very brief article, to try to explain fully the implications of the change-over; it is, however, our wish to draw owners'/operators' attention to the fact that the new regime will be different – and, no doubt, more expensive. It is for owners/operators to find out, if you have not already done so, exactly what this will mean for your own C of A aircraft; in order to help you further with your research, Paul has put onto the FFA website (Downloads page) the slides shown by a senior CAA officer – David Lewis, Head of Technical Support, Chief Surveyor's Office – to a recent meeting of GASCo at Gatwick. These slides contain all the technical references which are replaced by dots in the text above, and much more detail than I have summarised above.

7) Members who have aircraft on UK Permits to Fly will not suffer this degree of change; a few UK Permits will be replaced by EASA Permits, but the latter will still be administered by the PFA, and the maintenance requirements will not change. EASA Permits, as UK Permits, will be non-expiring, and will be validated by the annual Certificate of Validity issued by the PFA on behalf of the CAA. Most UK permits will remain as UK permits; PFA members should read carefully Barry Plumb's article in the next edition of Popular Flying.

Following a GASCo Council meeting 22 February and a GACC meeting 13 March

Mode S

Following my report in the December newsletter, detailed analysis by the CAA of the many responses received to the 2006 consultation have resulted in some more detailed proposals being put forward for discussion at the next meeting of NATMAC on 19 April. It is widely expected that following those – and no doubt other internal – discussions, the whole Mode S scenario will be put out to public consultation again later in 2007.

Carriage of ELT's

We were reminded by the CAA on 13 March that a revision to the ANO would come into effect on 15 March – ie, 2 days later!. The effect of this ANO revision is that any aircraft flying more than 10 minutes flying time from a coastline (or over certain desolate areas) will be required to carry an ELT. Discussion took place about the relevance of this legislation, given that ELT's permanently fitted to an aircraft that ditches are likely to end up on the sea bed (or equivalent) within a few minutes of the ditching. The alternative is to carry a PLB, but to comply, PLB's must be of a standard that transmits on both 121.5 and 416; as no such PLB's are currently available, there is a problem with complying with this legislation. I do not have a solution to this as I write, but if more information comes to light, it will be disseminated via the FFA e-mail newsletter system.

Martin Robinson of AOPA pointed out that there is an ICAO requirement that all aircraft carry ELT's by 2009 – but it is not known whether there will be exemptions for some aircraft categories.

MOGAS

Any member using MOGAS should be aware that by the time that you read this, CAA will probably have put out an amendment to Notice 98; this arises from EU requirement for petrol to have a proportion of biofuel, and the resulting effect if the MOGAS contains alcohol. If you are a MOGAS user, you should be aware of this potential problem.

AIS website

At GACC there was universal condemnation of the lack of user friendliness of the AIS website. Pressure is continuing to be applied on NATS to do something about this. If you look at the Highways Agency website, you only have to click onto any road to get a report on that road's current status; why cannot the same principle apply to the AIS website – ie, a chart based reporting system? There is no valid technical reason why not.

EU and EASA

Much is going on behind the scenes – a lot of it very positive – and I hope to be able to write a much more detailed report in the August newsletter.

Permits to Fly

Those members who operate on Permits to fly should have noticed that about two/three years ago, CAA added to the wording a condition that had accidentally been left off for some years. Condition 1 states "The aircraft shall not be flown over any assembly of persons or any congested area of a city, town or settlement, except to the extent necessary in order to take off and land at a government or licensed aerodrome in accordance with normal aviation practice".

This is a blanket ban on overflight, rather than the old "glide clear" rule; the PFA are in negotiation with the CAA to get this restriction on Permit aircarft, which cannot be complied with in certain areas, removed or modified. Watch this space...!

David Corbett

On a Lighter Note

The piece below was sent in Warwick Banks. I have included it in this newsletter as strangely enough, if anyone can recall, a very similar article was printed in a very early FFA newsletter based on an American scenario, with their term 'hogs' instead of pigs. Strange but true that what happens over there, eventually happens here including the political stupidity!

To: Rt Hon David Milliband MP, Secretary of State, DEFRA

Dear Secretary of State

My friend, who is in farming at the moment, received a cheque for £3,000 from the Rural Payments Agency, for not rearing pigs. I now want to join the "not rearing pigs" business.

In your opinion, what is the best kind of farm not to rear pigs on, and which is the best breed of pigs not to rear? I want to be sure I approach this endeavour in keeping with all government policies, as dictated by the EU under the Common Agriculture Policy.

I would prefer not to rear bacon pigs, but if this is not the type you want not rearing, I will just as gladly not rear porkers. Are there any advantages in not rearing rare breeds such as Saddlebacks or Gloucester Old Spots, or are there too many people already not rearing these?

As I see it, the hardest part of this programme will be keeping an accurate record of how many pigs I haven't reared. Are there any Government or Local Authority courses on this?

My friend is very satisfied with this business. He has been rearing pigs for forty years or so, and the best he ever made on them was £1,422 in 1968. That is - until this year, when he received a cheque for not rearing any.

If I get £3,000 for not rearing 50 pigs, will I get £6,000 for not rearing 100?

I plan to operate on a small scale at first, holding myself down to about 4,000 pigs not raised, which will mean about £240,000 for the first year. Then I can afford to buy an aeroplane.

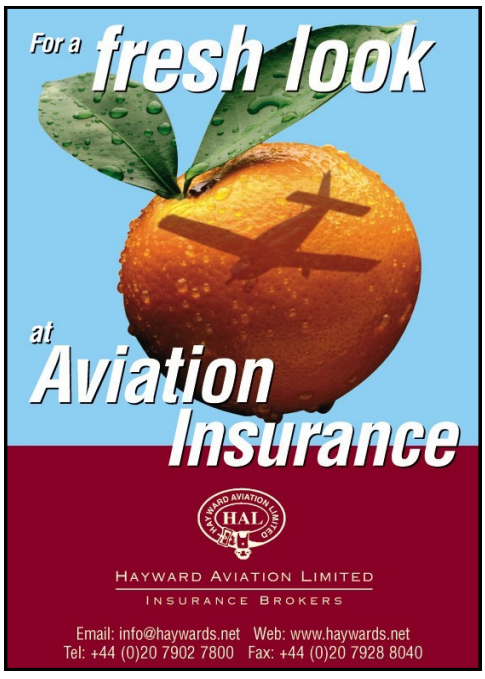
Another point: These pigs that I plan not to rear will not eat 2,000 tonnes of cereals. I understand that you also pay farmers for not growing crops. Will I qualify for payments for not growing cereals to not feed the pigs I didn't rear?

I am also considering the "not milking cows" business, so please send any information you have on that too. Please could you also include the Government information on set aside fields? Can this be done on an e-commerce basis with virtual fields?

In view of the above you will realise that I will be totally unemployed, and will qualify for unemployment benefits.

I shall of course vote for you at the next general election.

Yours faithfully,



Alex Henshaw MBE 1912-2007

Although not an FFA member, our President thought we should make some mention of this extraordinary man who died on February 24th, aged 94.

To anyone with an interest in aviation history the name Alex Henshaw will recall those exciting pre-World War II days, to many the golden age of aviation. Private aviators were vying with the R.A.F. to take on new feats of daring, and records were tumbling. Alex Henshaw takes his place among the famous private aviators of the time - Francis Chichester, Jean Batten, Amy & Jim Mollison, Arthur Clouston & Mrs Kirby Green, Charles Scott & Tom Black.

Born in Peterborough on November 7th 1912 and educated at Lincoln Grammar School, as a boy he had been inspired by some of the great pioneering flights of the nineteen twenties.



His other interest was motorcycles, but with financial support from his father, who thought it safer to be in an aircraft than on a motorcycle, he learnt to fly at Skegness. After his first solo at the age of 19, with father's generous encouragement, he bought his first aeroplane - a Gipsy Moth. His competitive nature soon had him entering air races and successes started to come. Faster and more competitive aircraft followed and by 1937 he had acquired the then current state of the art high-speed single engined monoplane, a Percival Mew Gull. A year later, aged twenty-five, Alex won the prestigious King's Cup air race with the Mew Gull - 20 laps of a triangular course of 50 miles.

But Alex Henshaw is chiefly remembered for a great feat of navigation and endurance - his solo return flight to Cape Town South Africa in 1939 setting off on February 5th from Gravesend. Piloting his specially prepared Mew Gull that had nine hours endurance, his first stop was Oran in Algeria, then a 1300 mile leg across the Sahara. Without navigational aids or radio, he made further stops in the Belgian Congo and Angola before reaching Cape Town. That was 6030 miles in 40 hours. (I think he would have a bit of bother in these countries nowadays!) After 28 hours, he returned by a similar route to land in Gravesend on February 9th . He set a time/speed record for the return trip that incredibly still stands today. There have been faster flights, but not solo in a single-engined aircraft.

The pre-war years were relatively carefree days for flying, with few rules and regulations. Alex remembers once loading his private plane with guns and ammunition and flying to Hungary for a shooting holiday with friends. International restrictions and bureaucracy would make that impossible now.

The coming of World War II saw Alex offering his considerable flying skills to help the war effort. After receiving a discouraging response to his application to become a fighter pilot with the R.A.F., he joined Vickers at Weybridge as a test pilot flying Wellingtons and the Walrus. Frustrated by the amount of administrative work, he was about to leave when he met Jeffrey Quill, chief test pilot of Supermarine, who offered him a job. He moved to their new Spitfire factory at Castle Bromwich and soon became their chief test pilot, testing them before they were handed over to the R.A.F. Inevitably accidents occurred, but Alex seemed to have a charmed life. On one occasion his Spitfire's engine failed while he was test flying over the built-up area of outer Birmingham, he crash landed between rows of houses, the wings sheared off and the engine and propeller ended up on someone's kitchen table - but he walked away from his wrecked machine with less than serious injuries.

He also had a reputation for pulling off amazing stunts with Spitfires when demonstrating their capabilities, sometimes getting criticised by the authorities for, in their view, taking unnecessary risks. Once he flew inverted down one of Birmingham's main streets to add sparkle to the Mayor's Spitfire appeal launch. This caused a police investigation but charges were never proceeded with.

During the six years of the war, Alex test flew 2360 Spitfires and Seafires, amounting to more than 10% of the total built. He also had experience of many other aircraft types including Wellington and Lancaster bombers (300 of them, one of which he barrel rolled) as well as Walrus and Sea Otters - but his real love was the Spitfire, "a magnificent thoroughbred machine", he recalls.

When the war ended he resumed private flying as a hobby and worked in South Africa for two years as a Technical Director of Miles Aircraft before returning to this country. He took over the running of the family farming and holiday business from his elderly father, which had been left in shambles owing to the war. Alex had the job of re-construction along six miles of Lincolnshire coast, which included an 18 hole golf course. Today a residential estate in Sandilands bears the name Henshaw for the main avenue, and all the roads, closes and streets are named after the various aircraft he flew.

Up to the time of his death in February 2007, Alex lived in a charming cottage in Newmarket, surrounded by paintings, photographs, trophies, awards and other mementoes of a brilliant flying career. Among them was a photograph of him chatting to a cigar smoking Winston Churchill.

Alex suffered a great loss when his wife Barbara, the widow of the Count de Chateaubrun, died in 1995 ending a partnership that lasted 58 years. "She was everything to me", he recalls "wife, best friend, and mentor".

He wrote three books, 'The Flight of the Mew Gull', 'Sigh for a Merlin' and 'Wings over the great Divide', all top sellers in their time. In his lifetime he received a Royal Humane Society award for saving a boy from the River Witham, he was awarded the Queen's Commendation for Bravery following his rescue work during the great floods, he became a Companion of the Air League and was awarded the Jeffrey Quill Medal in 1997 for promoting air-mindedness in young people. He also became a fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society in 2003.

He is survived by his son.

Paul Stephens

Portable Collision Avoidance System

I have had one of these devices on trial for the last year with mixed feelings.

The Zaon MRX is a very poor man's TCAS. It is extremely small and can sit on top of the dashboard right in front of you. A similar unit has been on the market for a few years, but this version has been tidied up and is very neat and self contained.

The little unit works by picking up another aircraft's transponder interrogation. In other words, when a transponder is turned on and the orange light flashes to show it is being interrogated, this PCAS picks that signal up and gives a digital read out of distance from the unit and whether it is higher or lower in hundreds of feet. The range is normally up to 5 miles and 5000 feet, but that can be adjusted. If more than one signal is coming in, it shows the biggest threat. That's the theory!

I installed it on a bit of blue tack on top of the dashboard and plugged it into the cigar lighter. It will also run on the two AA batteries. I set off on the Italian recce last March and thought it a bit strange that it only showed up one aircraft between here and Italy, although I did see a few. Then, whilst doing the sea crossing from Elba to Mallorca, it constantly buzzed for two hours and told me there was an aircraft 5000 feet below me and 1 mile away (which is about 5000 feet!). As I was also at 5000 feet above sea level, I thought it was either a ship doing 125 kts on exactly the same route or the PCAS was faulty. Then on the journey up through France, it constantly told me that there was an aircraft less than half a mile away at the same altitude. When I realized that it was picking up my own transponder I turned it off and condemned it to the back seat (the PCAS not the transponder!)

A very helpful man from Zaon in the States called me after I complained to Harry Mendelssohn. He told me how to change some settings to avoid it picking up my own transponder, I moved it round the cockpit, checked the aerial, but it ended up with the unit being replaced.

The second one works properly. It definitely grabs your attention when it lights up and usually ends up with you searching the sky for this UFO that is closing down on you. Because this cheaper model doesn't give any indication what the bearing of the UFO is, it ends up with you scanning the sky and quite



often not seeing anything. Bear in mind, that other aircraft are difficult to spot if more than 2 miles away.

I now run it on a reduced range of 2 miles and 2000 feet, especially in busier areas. I am still mystified why an aircraft that you would expect to have a transponder like a King Air or a Cirrus, sometimes sails passed the window and the little unit never wakes up. Perhaps it's because it's a dead area for radar interrogation (unlikely I would of thought in England) or their transponders aren't working.

The danger is that you stop looking out of the window. My feeling now is that it acts as an extra pair of eyes. I certainly wouldn't rely on it as there are aircraft without transponders out there, but I still question its reliability.

However, I'm sure most people have suddenly had a windscreen full of aeroplane and wondered where on earth that came from. At least it will work most of the time and might just spot something that is in your blind spot below the wing (or above in a high wing).

The units are available from Harry Mendelssohn for £299.00. If you want an idea of which direction the UFO is coming from, there is a more expensive unit, the XRX from the same manufacturer at £999.00 (plus VAT).

Paul Stephens

Fancy a Break?

Want the perfect break? Take your pick from the medieval towns with their network of streets, passages, squares and time served buildings, to the recreational canoeing (which is a regional trademark), or just watch the world go by with the perfect croissant and café au lait.

Le Bugue is situated in the heart of the Dordogne and is classed as being in the "Golden Triangle." Where the Vezere and the Dordogne river meet, it's a place to be visited again and again.

Fly into Perigueux Airport, 20 minutes from Le Bugue with all national car hire facilities available.

Le Hameau (meaning Hamlet), de la Douch is situated overlooking the beautiful town of Le Bugue. The property has two large double bedrooms with sleeping accommodation for 5 people and has recently been sympathetically refurbished. Rent of £200.00 per week required just to cover running costs.



Please contact Robert Wright (FFA No 646) 01827 883117 or robertwright@pawrightandsons.co.uk

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

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

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

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

If you have any queries whatsoever, contact **Tim Procter** at Hayward Aviation on 0207 902 7800 or email TProcter@haywards.net.

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

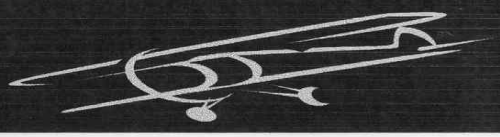
Please tell them you are an Flying Farmers member when you call.

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For further information and sample of Grass Protection Mesh, contact the address below or download the Slingsby Aviation Case History from our website.

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