

FLYING FARMERS ASSOCIATION

Newsletter No. 103

March 2010

Opening Thoughts

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Editor, Publisher & Printer;

P.A.& R Stephens
Moor Farm
West Heslerton
Malton
North Yorkshire
Tel: 01944 738281
Fax: 01944 738240
Email: chix@farmline.com

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Cover photograph;
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Since 1st December 2009

New Members

James Wilson, Loughborough
Piers Sheddon, Newport Pagnell

Members Lost

Tommy Abdy-Collins, Lechlade
William Blair-Hickman, Dover
Tim Harrison, New Zealand

The total membership is now 398

Chairman's Ramblings

Another winter is now very nearly behind us, and we will not need reminding that it was a 'proper' winter. We have grown to accept the recent mild winters as the norm, and snow and frost on the scale of this year comes as a bit of a shock – and yet I can remember when I was a teenager that every Sunday we had Ice Hockey competitions on the local pond. Nearly every house had a set of ice skates in their sports cupboard, and I still have mine, but I'll bet they are few and far between now.

In 1963 it began snowing on New Year's Eve, and it snowed somewhere in the UK for the next 71 days (that's every day until the middle of March!) I was a farm student that year in Sussex milking cows as relief cowman amongst other duties, and there were snowdrifts everywhere that you couldn't even see over – and was probably one of the reasons I vowed never to milk another cow! That year here in Essex we have a local lake on which they water ski, and I remember there being around 200 people skating on it and Mini's also driving around on it all at the same time!!

'The coldest winter for 30 years' the papers all shout out – 30 years? Big deal. If it was 500 years I could get a bit more excited about it. The media is totally obsessed with the weather, be it hot or cold, wet or dry, but difficult though it was in those days we just got on with it. Nobody thought of shutting schools or staying at home – if we couldn't drive, we just walked to work or school. Ah, the joys of 'Elf 'n Safety'.

And 'just getting on with it' is what farmers do best. The sprayers and spreaders have already been in action locally and the pace will surely quicken as the days lengthen and get warmer. As I write it is just 3 weeks to the clocks going forward – a most welcome time for us all, for both farming and flying.

Our Events Secretary, Rick, has done sterling work for our programme for this year. We kicked off in February with a fascinating tour around the Olympic site in London where the preparations are well advanced for 2012. It was all most impressive and I strongly hope that the end result will be better than the hand-over ceremony in Beijing which I personally found completely cringe-making, and not a good advert for UK plc. Lots of interesting events are in the pipeline for us and I earnestly urge those interested in an event to get on with their applications. Events are invariably over-subscribed, and we operate strictly on a first-come first-served policy with the bookings.

This year's study tour – already fully booked – remains in this country to make it more affordable in deference to the economic situation in the country and the weakness of the pound, although in principle our usual overseas tours are so interesting and popular that they should continue despite getting ever more expensive. Because they are organised 'in house' within the Association, they are always good value compared to being organised by a tour operator – and for that we very much thank all organisers of tours and events for the work they put in for us all to enjoy.

The pound continues its weakness; the price of wheat remains at loss-making levels, and the prospects are pretty dire at the moment. I for one still have ½ my wheat crop unmarketed and live in hope for some sort of price recovery – all my life I have had an uncanny knack of buying high and selling low! If the pound strengthens will it get worse? It doesn't seem very charitable to wish a disaster on farming around the globe (but not here, of course) but that is what it needs to change our fortunes for the better. Happy flying.

Martin Gosling

Committee Members

Dick Walgate	President	01472 371203
Martin Gosling	Chairman	01787 269369
Paul Stephens	Secretary	01944 738281
Andrew Cragg	Treasurer	01303 874251
Rick Holt	Events Secretary	01386 761816
Gordon Bellerby	Committee Member	01423 520770

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Editor's Notes

Yet another newsletter—they seem to come round quick!

The 'new' Committee met recently and you can see on the next page a brief summary of a 5 hour meeting.

You will notice on page 5 that we are seeking new representatives to fill the place that David Corbett has filled for so many years, gathering useful information for us. Please consider if you can help out as it is important that the FFA are represented on these councils.

I have done a member profile on David Keene on page 7. He had an accident last year which left him without the use of his legs. Thanks to our members, the FFA gave him the strength to get through the trauma and he is now back on his way to revalidating his flying licence!

Committee Meeting

The Committee met at the Chairman's (Martin Gosling's) house, after many aborted attempts due to adverse weather, on March 4th. Even then, we had to make use of Earls Colne's hard runway due to continuous rain on Martin's strip.

Martin opened the meeting by welcoming Gordon Bellerby to the committee.

The Secretary gave a membership report stating that we now have 398 members, having lost 3 and gained 2, since the AGM in October 2009.

The Treasurer presented the up to date accounts which showed that the FFA is still in a profitable situation - just.

The Events Secretary was unable to attend, but he had sent details by email. The 2010 programme is detailed elsewhere in this issue.

Thoughts for the 2011 programme included a visit to RAF Valley combined with Electric Mountain in Wales. Guernsey to meet our member Mark Dravers, who has an oyster farm which together with other attractions would make a two day meeting. Other subjects include willow growing for cricket bats, a visit to Adam Henson's farm featured regularly on Countryfile, anaerobic digesters, using wheat for ethanol, Syngenta at White Waltham, Bombadier in Belfast and thoughts of a European Tour.

If anyone has further ideas or can help organising the suggestions above, please contact Rick Holt by email rick@randlholt.co.uk

There had been some interesting e-news exchanges regarding the European Mountain Pilots (EMP) Federation. They have asked if the FFA would like to join their Federation, which is a conglomeration of the mountain flying clubs throughout Europe. It turns out it would cost us 2 Euros per member, so that idea was quickly dismissed!

Judging by the replies I received from our members there are quite a few who do enjoy mountain flying and have ratings to land at various altiports. One of our members wondered if it might be worthwhile forming a British Mountain Pilots organisation, which I would support by circulating information amongst our members. This organisation could then join the Federation and would obviously cost a lot less to join and would be supported by those with that particular interest.

As Secretary, I often get letters from county police forces and ports authorities, asking for copies of our membership list, so they can check on strips in their area. We agreed at the meeting that our list is confidential and members have given their details in confidence. I will offer though, to show some cooperation, to disseminate their information amongst our membership by e-news.

One of our members was refused permission, in deteriorating weather, to land at Inverness because he had not asked for PPR by telephone. He subsequently filed a Chirp report. The Chirp board, we think, missed the point and weren't very supportive of the pilot, so the incident was sent round on the e-news. This attracted a very big response with some strong feelings aired. These were sent to the Chirp board and GASCo were informed.

There have been several further exchanges including our Chairman contacting Inverness, all meeting with a bit of a stalemate - but our point was made and hopefully we made our member involved feel a bit better!

Flying Training from unlicensed airfields

Members will have noted the recent Press Release announcing that the requirement to conduct flying training from unlicensed airfield will be withdrawn later this spring. Unlicensed airfields that will be used for flying training will need to comply with the guidelines set out in CAP 428, which will be re-issued in revised format in the near future.

The CAA Press Release can be found at:
http://www.caa.co.uk/application.aspx?catid=14&pagetype=65&appid=7&mode=detail&nid=1838

Airport Security

There is currently a consultation open about Airport Security within the EU. I attended a briefing about this at DfT on 26 February; as a result of that briefing, the consultation period was extended for a further 10 days to 14 March, but it appears that this EU Regulation will not affect our members' airstrips and small airfields. "Fields, beaches, hillsides, rooftops, grass strips, lakes, etc" do not come within the definition of an airport, and UK DfT has the power to derogate for certain categories of airport. Our members' airfields (such as Shobdon, Great Oakley, Laddingford etc) are covered by the following wording:

"Member States may derogate from ... ... Regulation EC 300/2008 and adopt alternative security measures that provide an adequate level of protection on the basis of a local risk assessment at airports or demarcated areas of airports where traffic is limited to one or more of the following categories:

- aircraft with a (MTOW) of less than 15,000 kg;
- helicopters;
- categories 3 to 10 do not affect our members

DfT have stated that they "are minded" to derogate all categories except 8 and 10, neither of which affect our members in any way. Guidance about suitable risk assessment will be issued, but those of us who operate private or public airfields will almost certainly already have such a risk assessment in place.

OFCOM

OFCOM is having a second attempt to charge for the use of radio frequencies. I could write a lengthy article on this, but rather than duplicate articles that have already been so well written elsewhere, I draw your attention to the LAA website at the following link:

http://www.lightaircraftassociation.co.uk/2010/Consultation/ofcom_1.html

The net result of the current proposal, if allowed to go through, is that "owners" of VHF frequencies for tower, AFIS, and A/G, etc, will be charged £2600 per annum, from the end of 2010. If you have a VHF frequency and if you do not want to have this further needless cost imposed upon you, you must reply to the consultation – by 22 April.

MOGAS

Barry Plumb of the Light Aircraft Association is a member of the EASA working party that is investigating – in depth – the MOGAS situation. Publication of the very detailed report is now overdue, and expected imminently, so keep an eye on the aviation press.

David Corbett

Programme 2010



16th April	Brooklands
27th April	British Sugar, Downham Market
12th May	Marybelle Dairy & Broilers, Suffolk
17th May	European Tour - Borders & Scotland
15th June	Salisbury Plain Training Area
30th June / 1st July	2 day visit to Yorkshire
October	AGM—venue to be decided

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.

Friday 16th April 2010

We will land at Fairoaks at or before 10.00 for a 10:30 departure to the Brooklands Museum. Those travelling by car should go straight to Brooklands.

As well as the Museum, we can see the Mercedes Show which is nearby.

Coach to leave at 16:00 for a 16:30 departure from Fairoaks.

Organised by Tony Poulsom. Cost for the flyers will be £20pp to include the coach and entry to the museum. Cost for the drivers to be £9pp for the entry. Landing fees and lunch **not** included.

Deadline for entries 31st March

Tuesday 27th April 2010

We will fly to David Burnett's strip at Downham Market (650 metres) at 10:00 for a 10:30 departure to the Wissington factory. There will be a tour of the sugar beet factory in the morning followed by lunch at the Hare Arms (highly recommended). It is a fixed menu, so any vegetarians should contact the pub direct on 01366 382229.

At this plant, they also produce ethanol and even recycle the soil and stones from the beet.

After lunch we will visit a 28 acre glasshouse managed by Nigel Bartle, growing tomatoes, heated entirely by waste heat from the sugar beet factory.

Coach leaves at 16:00 for a 16:30 departure.

Cost to be £20pp to include both the coach and lunch.

Deadline for entries 7th April

Wednesday 12th May 2010

This event will be organised by Guy Plenderleith.

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

Morning Visit:-

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

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

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

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

Lunch

Afternoon Visit:-

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

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

More information, and a photograph of the first new shed,

construction complete and now housing it's fourth crop, can be seen here – www.bpsequipment.co.uk/news.php

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

09:00 hrs – Car arrivals to Ilketshall Hall, Ilketshall St Lawrence, near Beccles (for satnav NR34 8NP)
09:45 hrs – collect pilots and passengers from Beccles Airfield
10:30 hrs – arrive at the Marybelle dairy for tour
13:30 hrs – arrive at Ilketshall Hall for lunch
15:00 hrs – tour of new poultry site
17:30 hrs – coach leaves for Beccles airfield. Cars leave Ilketshall Hall.
18:00 hrs – coach arrives at Beccles airfield departure

£20 pp, landing fees not included
Deadline for entries 20th April

Scotland, Monday 17th May for 6 nights

Event fully subscribed.

Tuesday 15th June 2010

To be organised by Peter Gale at whose strip we will land (600 metres), on the edge of D123 at 10:00.

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

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

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

Cost to be £20 to include the coach and lunch.
Deadline for entries 24th May.

30th June / 1st July 2010

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

ARLA FOODS MILK PARTNERSHIP

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

To get to Helmsley we will need to leave Arla around



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

Tour ends approximately 16:30.

The cost will be £125 pp to include hotel, meals, guide and coach. £30 supplement for single room.
Deadline for entries 7th April

Representation - We Need Your Help

David Corbett, one of our Founder members, has for a lifetime being attending meetings at three important councils, representing the FFA. He is now wanting to gradually stand down, so we are actively seeking three members who would be willing to attend one of the councils each, to represent the FFA.

The three mentioned are GASCo which is the UK body for flight safety matters. They meet four time a year at various locations.

The General Aviation Consultative Council (GACC) which is sponsored and chaired by the CAA. It is an excellent body for the exchange of information and for putting pressure on the CAA to do what they say they are doing. They meet three times a yaer at Gatwick.

The General Aviation Awareness Council which is the body that deals with planning and similar matters such as windfarms. More details can be found at their respective websites. They meet four times a year in London

The FFA has for a long time donated 10% of membership fees to support these bodies and you will have noticed from David's reports, a lot of good information comes from attending the meetings and making the FFA's presence known.

So if you would like to help out the FFA and attend these interesting meetings on the FFA's behalf, please email me, chix@farmline.com, and we will see if we can get together three useful representatives.

To make the job less daunting, I'm sure David would hold your hand initially!

Paul Stephens

Olympic Site and Greenwich Maritime Museum







Wednesday 3rd February 2010

36 members and guests took part and were highly entertained and informed by our guide Julianne Marriott who took us on a walking tour from Bromley by Bow station to the View Tube next to the Olympic site. Apparently we are the only group she has taken who were fascinated by sewerage! Two photos of Julianne immediate left with Annette Gosling and outside the mills en route to the Olympic site.

The site looked impressive with continual movements of trucks etc. Many facts and figures were given e.g. 25 bridges were being built!

At the View Tube we had our own room with balcony and enjoyed lunch - all homemade. The building is made of recyclable material and was opened in Nov. 2009 with a viewing platform which we had private use of. We were thrilled that David Keene managed to join us.

After lunch some of us made our way to the Greenwich Museum to see the exhibits - some remarking that their knowledge of the underground and DLR had improved!

Rick Holt





Member Profile — David Keene

Through the e-news and newsletters recently, you'll have seen the name David Keene popping up because of his life changing accident on the farm.

A number of members know David, as he has been attending quite a few events recently including doing the European Tours for the last 5 years. However, some members have asked me to identify this person, so hence this Member Profile.

When I spoke to David, I think he was a bit taken aback that anyone would be interested in his unremarkable life; but I had an inkling that there must be more to him than that, because he has shown amazing courage and determination following his accident.



David's father and grandfather before him farmed a 500 acre farm belonging to Magdelen College, Oxford at Cuddesdon, only a couple of miles south east of the city. A further farm was added making a total farmed today of 1150 acres. Once, it is said, you could travel from Oxford to Cambridge and always be on College farms. A lot have now been sold, but unfortunately, the Keenes were never offered their farm.

David isn't sure where his flying interest came from, other than he enjoyed building model aircraft from the age of 4. He then found a passion in gliding and at the age of 14 pushed his bike on a 30 mile round trip every weekend to Weston on the Green, subsequently going solo at the age of 16. During this time he spent a lot of time in the back of the Auster tug. He was in the CCF at school and was awarded a Flying Scholorship, which involved doing a 40 hour residential course at Halfpenny Green and after 28 days at the age of 17, he got his PPL on the PA28.

Before going to university, he had a year out, initially as a farm student in Suffolk, then joined a Pre University Officer Cadetship which was a huge experience. He spent a month at Cranwell, two weeks at Granton on Spey with the Air Sea Rescue, parachuting at Abingdon and three months rotating round different bases flying in all the operational aircraft from Gnats to Lightnings. He went to Central Flying School at Kemble, flying every day in Gnats and Jet Provosts as a trainee pilot under trainee instructors. The cadets were useful in this respect as the trainee instructors first flew with full instructors, then 'practiced' instructing on the cadets.



So by one means and another, before David went to university, he had amassed a wealth of flying experience.

At Sutton Bonington University, Nottingham the work got in the way a bit of the sport and aerobatic flying with the University Air Squadron, flying Chipmunks and Bulldogs, and by this time he had totted up about 150 hours.

Returning to the farms, when David took the reins he specialized in dairy and arable, milking 350 cows in two herds. But the cows were never David's real passion.

He became involved in the Tiger Club during the 80's doing aeros in a Stomp and formation and displays in a Druine Turbulent with the Volkswagen engine. He was in a team of between four and six. He enjoyed the balloon bursting , floor bombing and the formation flying with the 3 lead aircraft being tied together with a 20 foot rope, with another Turbulent underneath to form a box formation.

His first FFA meeting was at Langar, which he flew to in his Turbulent. He now regrets he didn't spend more time with the FFA in those days, but with the cows, silage making and young family, it was difficult finding the time.

He was now married to Anne and had two children, Edward and Susannah (now 23 and 21 — Edward training to be a lawyer and Susannah to be a doctor).

During the 90's, David joined a YAK 52 group, the aeroplane being based on the farm. He recalls enjoying the week long meetings, twice a year at North Weald, where 20 to 25 owners would amass for aerobatic, formation and tactical combat training with RAF instructors. Eventually, David became one of the instructors.

Tragically, the YAK came to grief one day when it left the farm with two of his best friends doing aerobatics. Whilst near Turweston, a screwdriver jammed the controls and the aircraft went into the ground vertically causing the double fatality.

David then became involved in an RV4 group, again with the aircraft being based at his farm. He still went to North Weald for the aerobatic training, but now with fuel prices rising, the RV proved a lot more economical. He said in the YAK days, they burnt an amazing amount of fuel with 20 aircraft consuming 60 litres an hour each, North Weald were very glad of their business.

By now, as David realized that the children were looking elsewhere for a living and he was not really enjoying the cows, with their hard work and lack of any sensible margin, it was time to simplify life and become a simple arable farmer.

Together with a more suitable aircraft for touring (the RV) and more spare time, David could do more of what he really loved, and joined in more with the FFA activities. He claims that some of the most memorable times flying have been experiences on the FFA tours. He recalls going to extraordinary altitudes to get over the Alps en route to Italy, problems crossing the Pyrenees en route to Spain and the flight from Salerno in Italy to Elbe, where he had to keep heading due west out into the Mediterranean for such a long time to get round thun-

David Keene contd....

derstorms.

But then — In June 2009 only a few weeks after returning from Holland on the FFA tour, whilst only 10 feet up a ladder in the grain store, he fell and is still not sure what he landed on; probably the edge of a wall with his back, which put him in Stoke Mandeville for six months, paralysed.

He says he cannot stress enough, how the FFA with their continual support, helped to get him through this horrible time. He had many members visit him, sent him cards and telephoned him. He says a big THANK YOU to all that gave their time and thoughts.

Now this is where David's character kicks in. Despite loosing the use of his legs, he was back driving in no time, in fact he was driving himself to and from hospital when he was allowed out. He even drove by himself to the FFA London meeting in February this year.

But of course, what he really wants to do, is get back flying. He has joined the British Disabled Flying Association and has already flown their Warrior, attempting to get his license revalidated. As he says, this is back to square one, as that is the same aircraft type that he did his PPL in!

His aim is to regain his PPL by the 1st anniversary of his accident. First, he is having to get used to not only flying with a right hand throttle, but the right hand also has to do the rudder and the brakes!

He can't get a CAA medical as yet, but has a medical for an NPPL. He also wants to fly the Association's Bulldog at Lasham - again back to early beginnings.

He is currently taking inspiration from John Askew who has similar injuries to himself and flies a converted YAK52 and CAP 232 in aerobatic competitions out of Wickenby.

Somehow, David wants to form some sort of winch to get himself into his RV, which should be easier to convert to hand flying as it is on a Permit rather than C of A .

Meanwhile on the farm, David is looking to combine with a neighbour and run the farm on a share farming basis. He prays that life will come back to his legs and will never give up hope. He does have some feeling and pins and needles at times, so who knows?

We wish him the very best and hope his miracle will happen in the not too distant future. Good luck with the flying David.

Paul Stephens



All sizes of FFA fleece jackets in stock. Also waistcoats, baseball caps and ties. Call Roz Stephens on 01944 738281 or email chix@farmline.com

Lined Fleece Jackets - £30.00
Fleece Waistcoats - £16.00
Sweat Shirts - £14.00
Polo Shirts - £12.00
Baseball Caps - £5.50
Ties - £8.00

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

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

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

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

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

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