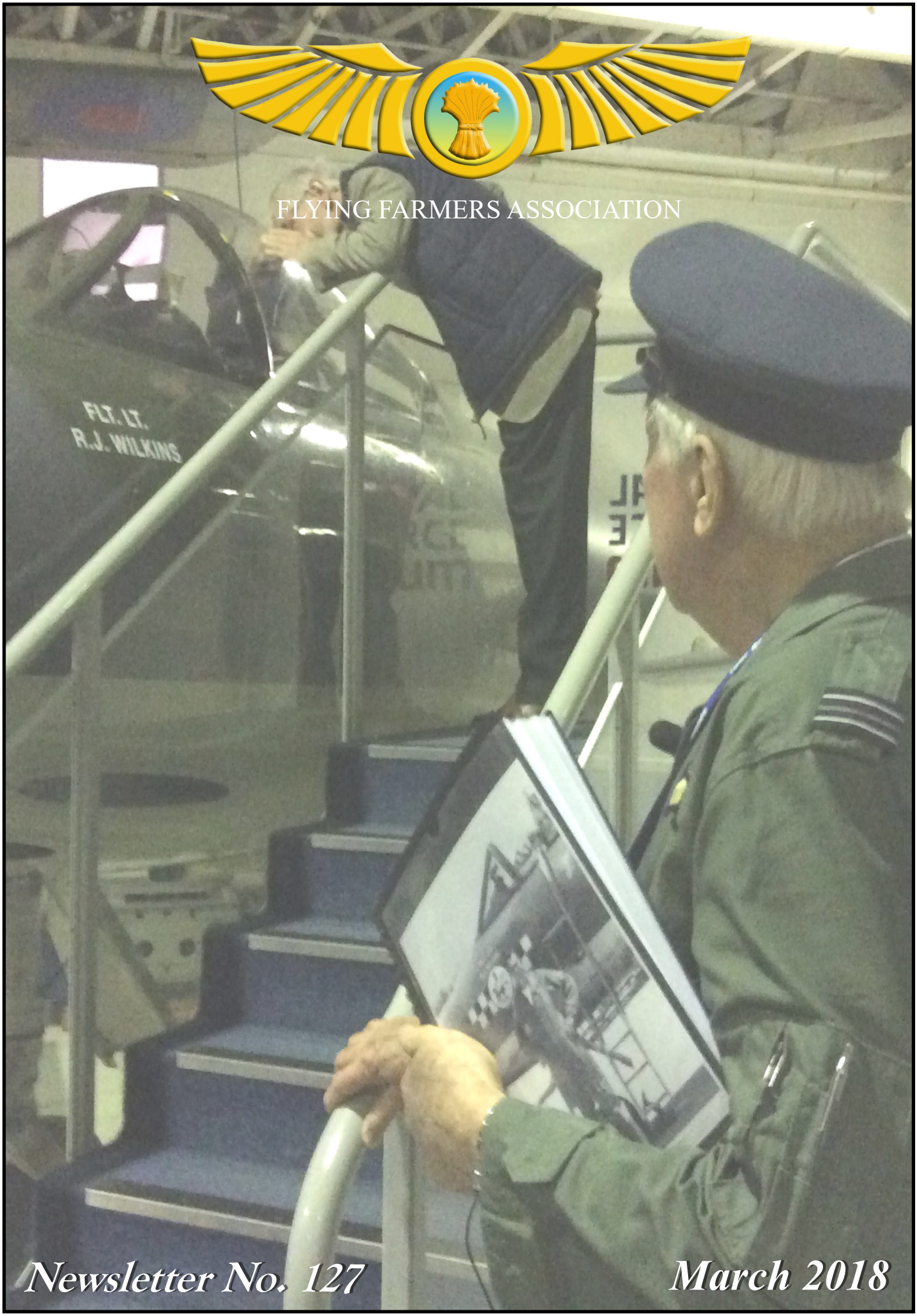


FLYING FARMERS ASSOCIATION

Newsletter No. 127

March 2018

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Cover photograph by Roz Stephens - Although not the best quality due to the lighting, this photo shows Flt. Lt. R J Wilkins telling us stories of his time in Aden, holding a picture of himself at the time, stood in front of his Hawker Hunter in the RAF Museum.

Joined Since 1st December 2017

8612 Tom Alderdice, NI

Chairman's Ramble - 3rd March 2018

Well, it's now officially the third day of spring and "The Beast from the East" finally arrived with a vengeance. I began writing this article rather cynically from the warmth of my house, but even I have to admit that many people got into rather a muddle up and down the country with the challenges it created. Down here in East Anglia is wasn't too bad (I have to admit that I am one of the few people who loves the snow and the challenges it brings, but then I do drive a 4 x 4 and I am retired). In the North of the country, and latterly the South West, it hasn't been nearly so funny and has created real challenges.

The biggest thoughts must go to those trying to look after livestock, having to feed them outside and on the hills, and with the water being all frozen creating further headaches. A job of real dedication. So many people have tried to keep going to work to keep the world running, when they could have just stayed at home - sadly in many cases they were just snarled up in stationary traffic while the different agencies did their best to get them going again. There have been many instances of 'good samaritans' getting to stranded people with food and hot drinks - all volunteers, and many farmers out for all hours with their snowploughs and forklifts trying to keep the minor roads clear while the highways agencies were fully committed to the major routes.

I still get seriously irritated to be told what to do, and how to go about our daily lives, and what to wear, and how we should be careful. I think it is a serious affront to our intelligence. If I need to go outside and it looks a bit parky, I tend to put on something to keep me a bit warmer. It seems just common sense to me - but then all these overpaid, bureaucratic, bowler-hatted officials feel that they must be mollycoddling us all the time to the extent that we are no longer believed to be able to think for ourselves! The other thing that really gets to me is the ridiculous extent to which it dominates all national media to the exclusion of rather more important matters. I'm not saying don't report it, just do it in moderation.

It has been likened to the winter of 1963 - but I can assure you that it is absolutely nothing like it. I was a farm student in Sussex in that year and a relief cowman to boot, and trying to milk cows with the water permanently frozen and the milk collection lorries unable to get anywhere near the farm so that all the churns (yes that is how we delivered milk then!) had to be taken miles to the open road by tractor and trailer. Every day we had to go to the kale field and cut, by hand, kale to feed the cows, one stalk at a time wading through all the snow with just a hessian sack tied with string round our waist to keep us just a tiny bit drier. There were 6 foot snowdrifts everywhere and it snowed somewhere in the U.K. for 73 consecutive days! Even cars were whizzing around on our local lake along with hundreds of skaters at the same time. THAT was a winter!

'Snowflake Britain' we really are. But then we have kow-towed to 'Elf and Safety for so long that we are not expected to know how to think for ourselves any more. It's lucky there's not a war on....

This week I learned the true explanation of 'How to make a small fortune out of aviation' (by starting with a large one). My aircraft went in for its annual check at the beginning of the week, and on Wednesday I got the call everyone dreads. "Hello, Martin, this is David your engineer, can you come over and see me as soon as you can please?" Half an hour later I was standing in his hangar forlornly looking at the main spar of my port wing which was displaying ominous signs of wet rot on its upper surface, followed by the gloomy prediction that, at worst, I would have to have a new wing (that's both wings as it is one whole unit), or, at best, the wing would have to be removed and shipped to the factory in France to be professionally repaired. Thus I could see at least 6 months downtime plus a sizeable depletion of my bank balance. An email to the factory plus attached photos were replied to by the weekend to say that they had no repair patches for that area of the wing in their scheduled repair database - but if the engineer referred to maintenance schedule such-and-such, he could possibly cut out the affected area and put his own patch

Committee Members

Dick Walgate	President	01472 371203
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Paul Stephens	Secretary	01944 738281
Andrew Cragg	Treasurer & Vice-Chairman	01303 874251
Neville Stops	Events Secretary Elect	01264 889678
Gordon Bellerby	Assistant Events Secretary	01423 520770
Rick Holt	Committee Member	01386 761816
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in with a blob of superglue, depending upon how far and how deep the affected bit was!

Well there has to occasionally be some good news (or at least less bad news). Today I went over to see what the prognosis was, and found that they had painstakingly removed all the bad bits and that the damage had not gone fully through the outer ply skin of the spar, so the integrity was not compromised. So hopefully a bit of replacement ply and a blob of glue and then cover it all up so it is out of sight and mind, and hopefully it's back in the air again.

With the 'Beast' lurking on our doorstep with snow and sub-zero temperatures, it is hard to think that spring drilling is just around the corner. I would think that in three weeks time towards the end of March many of us will be itching to be getting under way for another season's work.

Another full flying season of events and tours has been arranged by your hard working events secretary, Neville Stops, assisted by Gordon Bellerby, and it is hoped that there is something there for everyone. The fact that all events are fully subscribed within just a few weeks of 'going on sale' tells us that the popularity of the events is not waning - but in order to keep a full programme year on year, suggestions from the membership is still our biggest source of ideas. Please keep them coming. I look forward to meeting many of you throughout the season.

The best of luck to you all in your flying and your farming in the coming months.

Martin Gosling

Letters

I infringed controlled air space in October. I received a letter from the CAA asking about the circumstances and I replied in full with a detailed explanation about how the ptt switch had gone u/s at a critical time while over the Irish Sea. This led to a breakdown in communication and caused consternation among my nervous passengers who were afraid as we were out of sight of land, not in touch with anyone and unable to call for help if it went quiet upfront.

The CAA gave me the option of attending a course Airspace Infringements Awareness Course or taking the matter further. I grabbed the chance to do the course and duly attended a hotel near Arundel this morning.

There were 17 other offenders on the course. They were an interesting crowd including, the old, the young, ATPLs and Instructors. Which just goes to show that anyone can infringe airspace. One top bloke appeared in his own private EC120 and landed on the front lawn which gave him a bit of caché.

The course is presented by three experienced pilots all with great experience of flying.

The course opened with registration. We presented our licences and photo ID.

We were given voting fobs and pens together with a little course workbook. This booklet had all sorts of alarming info like the total number of infringements together with aircraft type, (Mostly SEP) types of airspace and the most infringed aerodromes, which is Heathrow by a country mile.

Also a booklet entitled The SkyWay Code which is published by the CAA and contains lots of useful info that used to be in the front of pilot guides. It calls itself, Guide to private flying rules, regulations and best practice. I presume that with the onset of paperless flying many pilots do not have these useful little books and notes to refer to. This publication can be found here https://www.caa.co.uk/General-aviation/Safety-information/The-Skyway-Code/ The Skyway Code is designed to provide private pilots with easy, quick access to the key information they need and includes:

Pilot responsibilities
Pre flight checks and flight planning
Airspace rules and regulations
Using aerodromes
Risks and Emergencies
Flying outside the UK
Links to useful safety and regulatory resources

As well as covering the regulations it includes examples of radio phraseology, tables to work out crosswind components and ground marshalling signals. We were given the latest GASCO Flight Safety magazine. Which is always interesting and a good way of reminding ourselves how careful we have to be to avoid becoming a statistic.

The first lecture was on the Consequences of Infringements and this really made the room go quiet. There are about 1,000 EVERY YEAR! This involves up to 30,000 aircraft due to diversions, delayed take offs and hold ups in the sky, this affects 5,000,000 passengers and can cost up to £50,000,000 in additional fuel costs! We were shown some videos of very hairy flights by pilots who were quite clearly well lost, bimbling straight over Heathrow zone for instance. Normal separation for radio controlled aircraft in controlled airspace is 1,000 feet and 3nm but if an infringer enters controlled airspace that is increased to 5,000 feet and 5nm. That can back up landing aircraft all the way beyond Rockall!

After a break for coffee the course galloped on with The Causes of Infringement where we were all invited to give our reasons for infringement. This was illuminating as we all gave the cause of our own infringement. I gave equipment failure which is true, but the most popular reason was distraction. There were others of course including Lack of Planning, temporarily unaware of position (i.e. lost!) However wrong altimetry and sudden weather were among the other causes. I was involved in a discussion about the selection of QNH for the ASR then travelling great distances and finding that airspace was infringed by height bust as a result of increasing pressure along the way. There are a number of TMAs where QNH setting locally is obligatory as a result. Transponders are though to have errors of up 125 feet and there was other talk about increments and errors in altimetry.

After lunch we were told about how to best Prevent Infringements, then there was an airspace quiz including new RMZs and TMZs. We were given a Personal Strategy for avoiding infringements and were asked to evaluate the information we had received. Everyone was very complimentary about the course and instructor / presenters.

I thoroughly recommend this course to all pilots in all aircraft and flying devices. It is useful and thought provoking. The courses and availability are published by GASCO here. http://www.gasco.org.uk/contact.aspx

I know that Gerald Hackemer represents FFA on the GASCO and I should like to thank him for his work.

Kind regards,

Happy Landings,

Roger Bell

I am dropping you a line as a consequence of attending a recent GASO safely meeting at Kemble. In my view these are always worthwhile and this years was excellent. Getting your logbook stamped can be evidence of an element of responsibility if facing difficulties with the CAA but also this year we were all presented with a simply brilliant orange plastic case containing all the information most of us had forgotten after passing our initial training course.

I would highly recommend these to all pilots. I have never before seen all that info packed into one easy to read format neat enough to keep in the cockpit.

Kemble, by the way, is a really excellent airfield, warm welcome, £10 landing fee and excellent catering. I am wondering if a visit to the company dismantling airliners might be a trip worth doing sometime?

Mike Cuttell

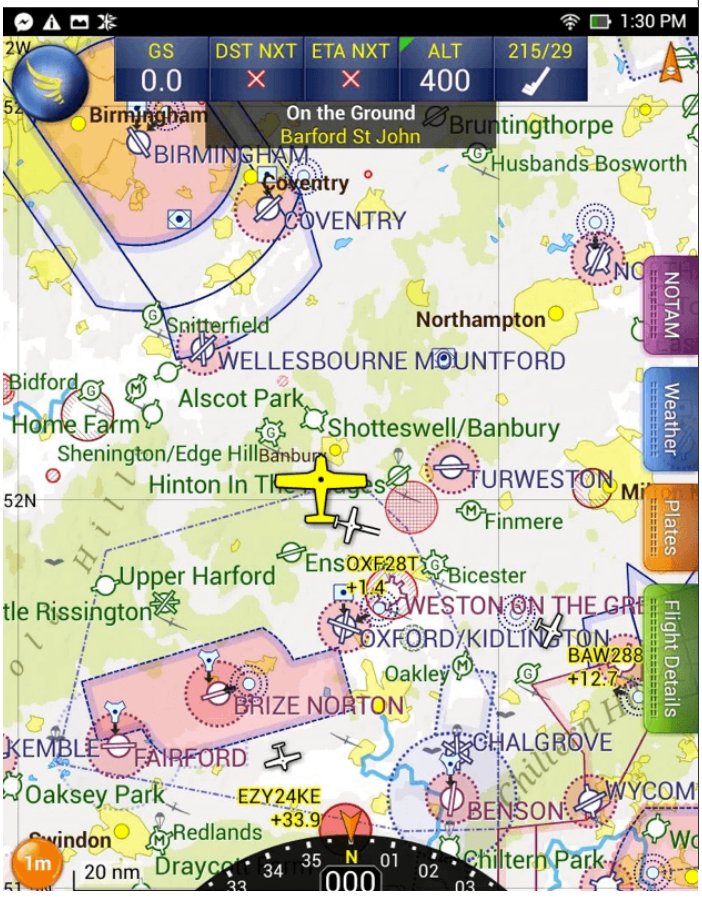
PilotAware

You might or might not have heard about PilotAware - an inexpensive positional awareness system that is used to help you see other aircraft and for you to be seen by other aircraft.

I have fitted one and linked it to Sky Demon which shows aircraft transmitting ADSB, Mode S / C and other PilotAware users on the moving map just like TCAS.

If you don't have Sky Demon or other compatible moving map displays, you can bring up a "radar" screen on any portable device such as your iPhone which will show the position of other aircraft and their height relative to your aircraft. If they have Mode S or ADSB you will get other information including their registration.

You can select a range of altitudes to filter out all the airliners





going overhead.

I did a test flight and found an aircraft about 10 miles away transmitting a registration and height, so presumed it had Mode S. I went after him and even though I closed to within about 3 or 4 miles, I never did get a visual contact. But as it is unlikely you can spot another aircraft until they are 2 miles away, that didn't surprise me, but I could monitor his progress in case he became a conflict.

Current price is £159.00 plus VAT from http://pilotawarehardware.com/product/pilotaware-complete/

One added advantage is if you have an iPad or similar without GPS, then you will be able use the unit as a GPS receiver.

Paul Stephens

Committee Meeting

A Committee meeting was held at the RAF Museum after the FFA visit on January 24th.

All the Committee were present including the new member - Giles Abrey who will bring new and refreshing ideas.

The first thing that was decided was that we would restock with FFA ties. The joining fee (not the subscription) will be raised from £15 to £25 to partly cover the cost of including one in the joining pack for every new applicant.

They will be available to buy from March onwards for £15. We are also considering something for the lady members - we have 8 ladies who are members in their own right and of course all wives / partners are members as well, as your membership is a family membership. We are looking at either brooches or scarves with the FFA logo on.

Whilst being guided round the museum, Gordon Bellerby was trialling a microphone and earpiece system that our Events Secretary, Neville Stops has suggested to aid our hearing at events. So often, we all cannot hear the guides and we miss so much of the conversation. These should be in use this summer for events - after all we are getting a little deaf as we get older!! (Speak for yourself Stephens!)

The continuous debate about eligibility for new applicants continues. The genuine active farmer who flies from a strip on his farm is no problem, but when we get applicants with a vegetable patch applying that maybe have no connection with farming, then we have to take a hard line and say no in order to keep our Association as an Association of Farmers, not an Association of Allsorts.

If you do get asked to propose a new applicant, please note that the requirements are that they should be a farmer or landowner who flies or has an airstrip on their land.

We recently received a request from an active member who





brings a friend of his along to events. He wanted him to join, but we had to decline because he doesn't fit the eligibility requirements. We come across these sort of people who do things for the Association, yet they cannot become members. A few years ago, some of us on the Committee proposed a new category of membership to accommodate these people called Associate Members. At the AGM held at Duxford that year, the motion was very heavily opposed by the membership. However, the position might be looked at again.

The new FFA Indemnity Agreement written by the FFA solicitor, Tim Scorer is being released with this newsletter. Tim ran through the Agreement at the last AGM and he has written an introductory article elsewhere in this newsletter. It can be used free of charge by all members, but has to be controlled and only for our members' use.

Remember, this is not an insurance policy, it is an Agreement that you can use between yourself and any potential visitor to your strip. It must be tailored to your particular circumstances and makes your visitor aware that he will be responsible if the worst happens and he cannot hold you, the operator of the strip, liable. It should be used in conjunction with a strip insurance policy.

Several members have asked if we have an Agreement available, maybe because they are aware that as farmers, we most likely have assets that a solicitor will go for in the case of a claim.

Some of you might be aware that there are changes about to take place with the Data Protection Act. This is being superseded by the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which has to be in place by 25th May 2018.

We all hold databases, whether it be a contact list on a mobile telephone or a batch of bank details for BACS payments. You, as farmers, might or might not have to register with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) and comply with the regulation.

It is all about giving people that you hold data from, being aware of what happens to the data and they have rights to ask you to withdraw their information from your databases. If you have CCTV on your farm for security, this makes it more likely you will have to register. The cost is £30 a year and not difficult to carry out.

As an Association, although we don't use data for marketing purposes and it is held for internal use - mailing newsletters, holding an emailing list and holding strip details for FFA members' use, we still have to register and comply as we are profit making organisation that uses membership records for administration.

We will be making a few small changes in order to comply which entails altering the joining application form to make applicants aware what we do with their data, that is all password protected and not used for any purpose outside of the FFA. We have to delete all records of any member leaving and we have to make the website secure.

Neville Stops and Gordon Bellerby have a full program of events for this year which can be seen in this newsletter and will be kept up to date on the website. They even have an outline for 2019 and 2020. However, this is no reason to stop the suggestions coming forward, as we like a variety of subjects and spread throughout the country.

Paul Stephens

Keith Houldcroft 1932 - 2018

We have had a sad note from Keith Houldcroft's son, Andrew informing us that his father died recently.

He was still regularly flying a gyrocopter up until last year and was involved with Leicestershire Aero Club, The Helicopter Club of Great Britain as well as the Flying Farmers Association. He certainly enjoyed the challenge of learning to fly both aeroplane and helicopter during his retirement and meeting others with a similar interest in flying.

He will be missed from our meetings as he was a regular attender.



Keith arriving at a meeting in Essex in his autogyro.

An Introduction to the FFA Indemnity Agreement by Tim Scorer

Background

When I was fortunate enough to acquire a farm strip of my own, it was the answer to a lifelong dream. Only once did it nearly become a lifetime nightmare, due to the inexperience of a pilot guest. The detail of that is for another day. But I can say that "I learnt a lot about airstrip owning from that". Some years later, in my professional capacity as an aviation lawyer, I was asked to advise an unfortunate airstrip owner and his "High Street" solicitor, about the legal consequences of a similar incident to the one I had experienced, but with far worse and worrying consequences for the airstrip owner. He was being sued in Court by a passenger in an aircraft who suffered nasty injuries when the pilot made a bad landing on the airstrip. Either as a result of the pilot's insurance being invalid or insufficient, the passenger and her lawyers had turned on the airstrip owner, looking for compensation.

So, what next ?

Some readers of more advanced years, may recall the "blood chit"? The idea was that before taking a passenger in your aircraft you asked them to sign away their rights, and hold you, the pilot", immune from any claim against you, whatever injury (even fatal), the passenger may suffer. I am not aware of old cases where that exclusion of liability was upheld in a Court of Law, but blood chits, and similar exclusions of liability for personal injury, were rendered unenforceable by the Unfair Contracts Terms Act in 1977. So as the owner or operator of an airstrip (a) you do have potential liabilities and (b) you cannot exclude death and personal injury liability.

What CAN you do with these liabilities, to eliminate them or at least lessen their impact ? Well, primarily, you can pass them on directly or indirectly – to Insurers. Every airstrip owner should have a reasonable amount of cover for those liabilities; the amount of cover and the cost of it will be advised by an Insurance Broker. Secondly, you can try to pass it on to a third party by making them "indemnify" you against any liability claim, or you can agree with the third party that they themselves will not join you in a claim from an injured party.

How do we do that then ?

We need to back track a bit. When I had the airstrip, to which essentially only invitees were welcomed, I prepared an information sheet, of which everyone who planned to fly in, was sent a copy. This contained all the essential information a pilot should know about my strip... a more comprehensive version of a Pooley's plate. Everyone should have/prepare one of those. It tells pilots not just about runway length and orientation but other things such as wires on the approach, sheep grazing, tractors mowing and so on.

But then in these litigious times, maybe one needs something more. What you need is something which a pilot has to sign. It reminds him that as P.1. he has responsibilities for his aircraft, his passengers, his landings, and his flying. It identifies the responsibilities on him to ensure that he can make a safe flight, and a safe landing. It puts responsibility on him to be satisfied he can safely land on limited length runways. And it reminds him that you, the airstrip owner, have no control over his operation, or how well, or insufficiently qualified he is on short strips, etc.

Most importantly, having left him in no doubt about his responsibilities, his signature confirms that if anything happens on your strip, (a) he will be using it at his own risk (b) he will indemnify you against any liability which may rest on you (unless you have in some way been at fault yourself) and (c) he will comply with all regulations, instructions etc regarding his operation of the aircraft and his flight.

Where now ?

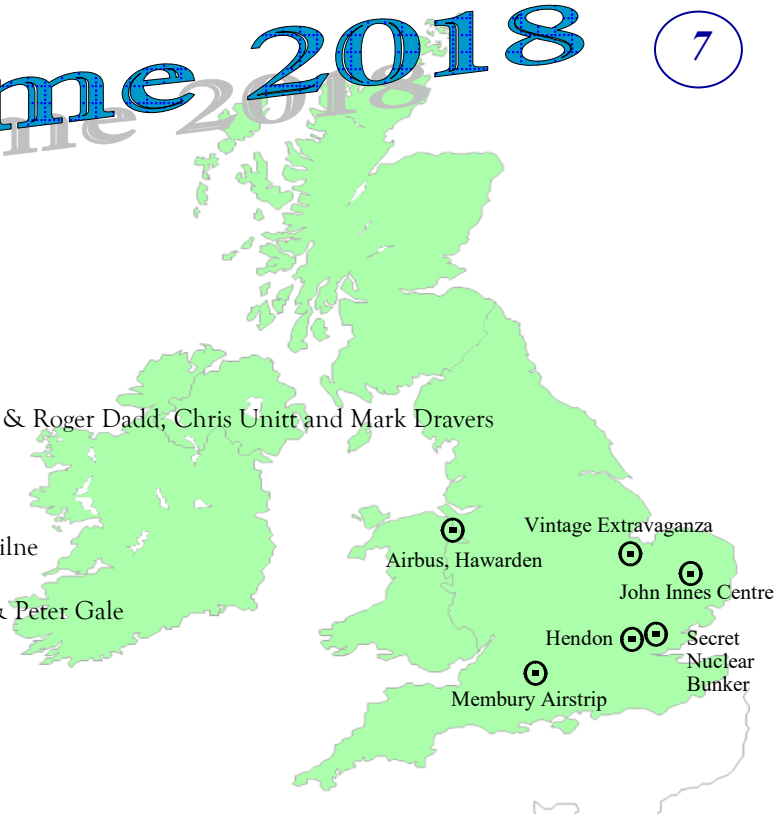
As part of your membership benefits from the FFA, a form of Indemnity Agreement, which encompasses these matters, has been prepared. It is available to paid up members free of charge to be used by them. It does however require a degree of co-operation from you. This will be outlined in the User Guide which will be circulated with the Agreement. Essentially you will need to produce your Pilot Information sheet, relating to your own strip, and you will need to maintain a proper record of those pilots who have signed up to your agreement. You will also need to agree that your details (name and address, and airstrip address) can be passed on by the FFA to me as the FFA Legal Adviser, so that I have a record of who is using the agreement. Bear in mind, that one day (God forbid) this signed agreement may become an exhibit in Court, on which you need to rely.

To advise your interest in having one of the agreements made available to you – and only you – you need only to contact our Secretary, Paul Stephens on chix@farmline.com giving him your details. He will then put you in touch with me, and I will contact you with the agreement and the User Guide. In the meantime, if you don't have airstrip insurance, this would be a good time to make enquiries. We suggest you call Hayward Aviation Ltd 02079027800, quoting your FFA number, where an FFA Scheme is already in place.

Tim Scorer

Programme 2018

24th January	RAF Museum, Hendon - Neville Stops
25th April	Secret Nuclear Bunker - Martin Gosling
6th to 14th May	European Tour - Peter Evans & Roger Bell & Roger Dadd, Chris Unitt and Mark Dravers
17th & 31st May	Airbus, Hawarden - Richard Howard
5th June	Membury Airstrip - David Hunt & John Milne
20th June	Re-visit John Innes, Norfolk - David Soul & Peter Gale
4th & 5th July	2nd Vintage Extravaganza - Tony Fisher



Please note - if you happen to see anything in your area that would form the basis of an interesting FFA visit, then please contact the Events Secretary, Neville Stops (neville.stops@gmail.com) or Gordon Bellerby (gordon@jgbellerby.com).

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.

Pop-In Meetings

By popular request, it has been decided that we should hold some informal meetings where members can meet up at weekends.

David Keene has arranged the first two to be held at Turweston on 7th April and Tollerton on 14th April from 11:30 am, just for a chat and / or lunch.

If these are a success, anyone can organize a meeting, preferably co-ordinated through David (David@davidkeene.co.uk). They will then be published in the Newsletter and / or by emails.

They can be at airfields where there will be facilities or at members' strips. Please note that for FFA events such as these, if you are hosting a meeting at your strip, you will be covered by the FFA Insurance Scheme for the day, providing it is a recognized FFA event.

Kelvedon Hatch Secret Nuclear Bunker, 25th April 2018

Kelvedon Hatch was built under such secrecy that neither the locals nor the contractors building it knew how it would be used. It is built into a hillside, encased in 10' thick reinforced concrete 100' underground. It is where devolved central government and military commanders would have run the region had the U.K. been attacked and nuclear war broken out. (Mark you one has to wonder for how long their agony would have been prolonged and what they would have come up to in the outside world once their supplies had run out!)

It is still a 'secret nuclear bunker' but now there are big brown signposts all over the area pointing to where it is!

Handed back to the farmer in the '90's on whose land it sits, Mike Parrish has developed it as a tourist attraction specifically by **not** developing it. It is very much in every sense authentically as it was when handed back from government control, and it is that which makes it so interesting. It is still the cold, austere concrete structure with most of the original fittings. There are no glamorous guides to show you around - just a hand held audio 'wand' to guide you from section to section, where you can linger as long as you wish. Even the small cafe at the end is entirely self help with honesty boxes to pay into. Mike says it all works extremely well.

He is however laying on a buffet lunch for us all at the end of our visit in his conference area.

0945 - All aircraft arrive Stones Farm airstrip. Coffees, teas and biscuits on arrival
1000 - Coach leaves for Kelvedon Hatch
1115 - Arrival at Kelvedon Hatch
1130 - 1330 Participants free to explore bunker at their own speed
1330 - 1430 Buffet lunch in the bunker
1430 - Coach leaves to return to Stones Farm
1545 - Arrival back at airstrip - teas and biscuits available
1600 - Participants free to depart at will

Costs will be £30/head, to include the coach, entrance charge and buffet lunch, payable to R M Gosling

Entries will be limited to 45 participants on a 'first come first served' basis.

Please check with Martin to see if this event is already fully booked - 01787 269369

FFA European Tour - 6th to 14th May 2018

This next year's tour is purposely closer to home to cater for

those that aren't as adventurous or don't want a long hallock.

It is also split into 3 parts and members can enter for all three parts or any one part.

Part 1 - Peter Evans is arranging the first part, which is basically a tour of the New Holland combine works in Belgium. We will gather in Kortijk Airport on 6th May and the factory tour is on the 7th May.

Part 2 - Roger Bell then takes over in France where we will land at St Omer, Abbeville, Argentan and Cherbourg, visiting La Coupole Museum, 1000 cow milking unit, Safron Farm, Cite de la Mer and nuclear submarine. (Please see the website for more details and a list of participants)

Part 3 - Roger Dadd, Chris Unitt and Mark Dravers take over on 11th May with visits to Channel Islands Air Search, Guernsey Woollens, The German Occupation Museum and dinner on Hern.

12th May there is a visit to Alderney including a train ride, a coach tour and dinner at the Beauchette Marina Restaurant.

On the 13th May we visit the island of Sark and finish with a farewell dinner at the Cobo Bay Hotel where we will be staying.

A rough cost guide for these last three days is in the region of £430 per head based on double occupancy room.

There are more details on the EVENTS page of our website. Please contact Peter Evans, Roger Bell or Roger Dadd (depending on which parts of the tour you would like to attend) to see if there are any more places available or any cancellations.

Visit to Airbus, 17th & 31st May 2018

Visit to Airbus, 17th & 31st May 2018

Flying in to Hawarden (EGNR), bacon baps from 08:45, to visit the Airbus factory where they manufacture 1000 wings a year for their range of aircraft. They are transported to Toulouse by road, sea and the Beluga Super Transporter aircraft.

Lunch at the Chocks Away restaurant on the site.

In the afternoon we visit the Anderton boat lift at Northwich. Built in 1875, this device lifts boats 50 foot on cables between the levels on the canal. It was restored in 2001. There is only one other which is in Scotland.

Restricted to 20 per day. Unfortunately, no Auto Giros, no aircraft below 450 kg MTOW and no tailwheel pilots below 200 hours on tailwheels. Organised by Richard Howard. Reply slips will be in the March newsletter.

Avgas available – self service by CC

Entry cost £38.00 covers everything except land fee which is £15.00. Please fill in the enclosed reply slip.

Itinerary for Airbus / Anderton Boat Lift visits 17th and 31st May 2018

Fly to Hawarden Airfield EGNR	
Bacon Bap at Chocks Away Diner from	08.45
Bus departs Chocks Away Diner Hawarden	09.20
Bus departs Airbus	12.45
Lunch Anderton Boat Lift	13.45
Board Boat Lift	14.45
Depart Boat Lift	16.00
Return Chocks Away Diner Hawarden	16.45

Each pilot to pay agreed landing & parking fee, discounted to £15

Membury Airfield, 5th June 2018

09:30-10:00	Arrive
10:00-10:30	Brief talk from Southern Sailplanes
10:45	Depart tractor &trailers by Ramsbury
11:15-12:30	Brewery/distillery/chipwood boiler tour
12:30-13:30	Lunch
13:45-16:00	Farm and forestry tour
16:30	Membury for departure

To enter, please return the reply slip to John Milne.

Re-Visit John Innes Centre, 20th June 2018

We once again visit the John Innes Research Centre and hope that the weather will be kind and flyable this year.

We will be landing at FFA member Robbie Buxton's Kimberley Hall airstrip with Coffee/Tea and biscuits plus for the early arrivals a quick personal tour of Kimberly Hall by our host Robbie.

The coach will leave at 9.30 am sharp for The John Innes Centre at Norwich where we will meet Dr Anne Edwards our tour director. Anne tells me during the last year there have been major advances in finding a control for flea beetle in OSR and disease control in wheat.

There will be a full day of exploring all the different research and development at the centre and viewing field trials.

The JIC is an independent international centre of excellence specialising in plant science and microbiology for the benefit of agriculture and training scientists.

Lunch will be in the staff canteen where there is a hot menu choice or sandwiches. The prices are modest so depending on choice the cost will be on a pay as you go pp basis.

The charge for welcome coffee/tea and biscuits, coach plus any surplus donation to the JIC charity will be £20 pp. Booking forms will be in the March Newsletter and entries close at the end of May.

Peter Gale.

2nd Two Day Vintage Extravaganza, 4th & 5th July 2018

Day 1 – July 4th. We should arrive at Fenland airfield by 9:00am so that we embark the bus at 9:30am.

We travel to our first venue just north of Boston to Robert Crawford's rare collection of steam and tractors. A real time warp indeed!

Next we would take lunch at the Poacher Pub nearby then on to Richard & Val Mason's collection of vintage Ford tractors a short distance from the Poachers. After which, time permitting, we travel east on the A17 to the largest North Level IDB pumping station at Tydd Gote, then on to The Cromwell Hotel in March.

There will be a guest speaker who will give us an illuminating talk on Cambridgeshire aviation from the early years of flying.

Day 2 – July 5th. I would like to to embark the bus at 8:45am to travel approx 8miles to John Thomas' fine collection of immaculately restored vintage lorrys. After which we go on to Gordon Easton's museum to view his latest acquisitions.

There will be a BBQ ???? lunch at Gordon's museum. I will give you the venue postcodes in due course for those who might be delayed. I will refine this info in due course into an easier readable format with the approximate timings and post codes for the magazine.

Tony Fisher

Royal Air Force Museum Hendon, 24 January 2018

January (non flying) visits for the FFA members have become pretty much a norm. It allows us to keep in touch and, due to the reinstatement of name tags, it also helps us to remember who we are.

This time it was to be RAF Hendon, the "Birthplace of Aerial Power,"and with an arrival time of 10 am it meant an early departure from our home bases which ranged from deepest Wales to Wiltshire, Kent, Suffolk, Gloucestershire and Yorkshire. The drive was dark, wet and miserable and as we headed closer, traffic was pretty intense .

The greyness and drabness of the houses bordering our route as we neared our destination, a stark reminder of how other folks live. It served to remind us how very fortunate we are to live in beautiful surroundings.

The museum was not too difficult to find thanks to GPS (and the brown signs) and we entered a new and impressive car park. Although there was evidence of much new preservation work one could not escape the feeling that this priceless estate was about to be strangled by oppressive building which seemed to threaten its very existence.

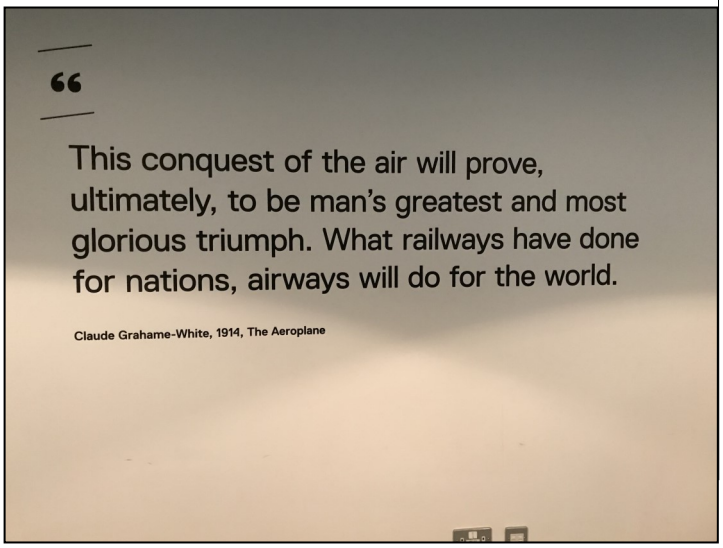
In the near distance were a pair of very substantial WW11 wooden RAF high speed rescue tenders . In their day no doubt a most welcome site for so many downed aircrew who would otherwise have lost their lives. It seemed a shame that they were not undercover.

Visible in a large and yet unopened modern building was a Sunderland flying boat which , given that they would never have operated at Hendon, seemed slightly out of place. One hopes that the rescue tenders may, eventually, be housed in there in order that they too will be preserved.

Pretty much on time 40 members were welcomed into the newly refurbished catering department and whilst we enjoyed a welcoming cup of coffee we were split into 4 groups and introduced to our guides, Roger Wilkins, Terence Burke , Cliff Colmer and Bruce Clark.

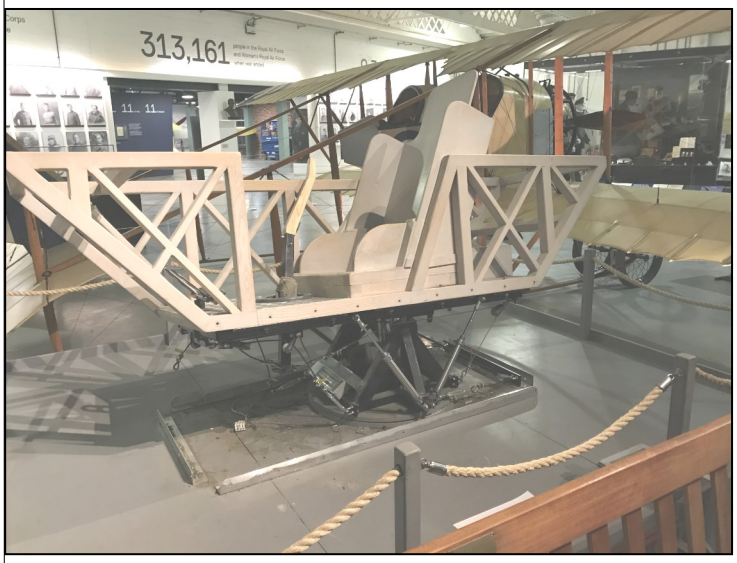
Hendon's links with flying date back to 1862 when one Henry Coxwell conducted meteorological research with a balloon from there.

Our tour began in the original Claude Graham-White hangars dating back to 1910 which contained a treasure trove of restored original aircraft and fantastic replicas of those first aeroplanes and associated artefacts under the original timber framed roof.



The fact that they, and the building, have been preserved was nothing short of miraculous and it was easy to imagine that with a minimum amount of 'fettling' these aeroplanes could still fly today such was the quality of their preservation. They seemed so fragile that one would suspect that they would not be able to withstand much 'g' force in battle.

We were surprised to learn that as early as 1886 aerial radio communications were being developed and some large and cumbersome electronic examples were on display along with early bombs and fearsome steel darts known as flèches which were literally thrown overboard above battle lines. What a ghastly thought, but this was war!



We were shown examples of the earliest interrupter gear to allow guns to fire forward through the propellers of fighting aircraft. There was also a replica of a very simple 1920s form of the later 'Link Trainer' simply designed to demonstrate effective use of controls. In one display case was an early electrically heated flying suit but it would have left ones' nether regions on the chilly side. How it was powered in the days before engines had generators was not obvious.

We were told that it was not uncommon for gunners to be ejected from the fuselage whilst either shooting or changing magazines if the pilot had to take evasive action whilst they were standing.

The building contained many wonderful photographs of the aircraft assembly lines, one could almost smell the dope. We ascended the stairs to view a replica of Claude Graham-Whites' office. It had been re created pretty well judging by early photographs although very little would have been original. By 1912 Claude was even operating a Farman biplane on floats with its fuselage emblazoned with the words 'Wake up England' . Words that might well be appropriate in 2018.

Then It was time to move to the main display hangar. Due to refurbishment going on in the other two display areas the display was somewhat compressed but nevertheless there was generally plenty of room to get around.

As we entered and to our right was a magnificent model Spitfire in polished aluminium in a glass case and above our heads was a glider variously known as Eon / Grasshopper / Dagling identical to the one which was used by the ATC squadron on our school rugby field . We had an enormous rubber bungee which was marched out in a Y shape by volunteer cadets until the command 'release' was given, the pilot released a hook on the tail and





it shot into the air. I was also pleased to see an example of a T31 in which I made my first solo 64 years ago and high in the rafters an Auster Autocrat which was an example of the first aircraft that I had owned. I would guess that many of our members have owned, or flown, the Auster. It was notorious for showing up those who could not handle tailwheelers during the landing phase.

Every aircraft in the main display was notable but just to pick a few, the Lancaster had to be a favourite. A survivor of 137 raids over enemy territory when the average lifespan of a Lanc was just 20 sorties, it must be among the most attention grabbing. The Vulcan too - how did they fit it in !

Of particular note was the Meteor which had been flown by one of our guides Cliff Colmer and it still had his name on the side. He was immensely proud of that.

There were a very representative selection of fighters, WW11 and beyond. I constantly wonder how those young fliers fought their battles, the Spit had a thirst of at least 75 gallons per hour at full throttle and I guess there were occasions when they ran out of fuel whilst finding their way home. That coupled with the g forces in battle and bad weather must have been pretty testing even on young fit human frames.

Another fighter displayed there and worth a mention was the Hawker Tempest. It came into the war fairly late but was renowned for its high speed , massive fire power and low level strafing capability. Powered by the astonishing Napier Sabre sleeve valve engine with 24 cylinders in an H configuration, it developed 2800 horse power, drinking 117 gallons of fuel and 6 gallons of oil per hour. When one sees the internal workings of the Sabre (as can be seen in a sectioned model at Duxford) one is left wondering how it was done. British engineering at its best. There was a Sabre engine on display but it was tucked away with the helicopters. Attempts are being made to get a Tempest into the air again in the UK.

Worth a mention too is the example of a B25 light American bomber, a rugged and very capable machine made famous due to the raid on Japan by a flight led by James Doolittle. It gives the impression of sheer muscle power with its two Wright radials. I am told that they were incredibly noisy inside.

The very last fixed wing landing at Hendon was that of a Cherokee lost in bad weather on 22 December 1968. The Queen opened the museum on 15 November 1972 but in the meantime the old airfield had been swallowed by the construction of 1700 new homes. One must wonder whether this airfield was too precious to lose given its place in history and its irreplaceable buildings most of which have now gone.

This was an excellent, if not somewhat sobering, visit. WW11 resulted in the production of so many aircraft types in such a small timeframe the likes of which will never be seen again. It is right that we should preserve all we can for future generations and RAF Hendon has made great efforts towards that cause.

Our minds could not fail to turn to those who did not return and the fact that to our nations shame we have not had the decency to award a bomber command medal to reflect the 55 thousand young airmen lost in conflict.

Our thanks, as always, to Neville Stops who planned this visit and our guides who helped us interpret what we saw.

Mike Cuttell





Early in 2017, Roz and I started to look at doing a repeat of the GOANA flying safaris we did 15 years ago. Mal, who ran GOANA, had closed his business down shortly after our 2004 FFA tour due to many factors including increasing bureaucracy, increasing costs and his wife becoming ill.

We tried several ways to find someone who would organise things for us down under and came back to Air Safaris International. This is Clare McEwan's business which he - yes he, runs from his home in Toronto, Canada. He had actually tried to buy Mal's business in 2005 and he emailed me several times to see if he could interest the FFA in doing another tour.

It looked good apart from one thing - the price. It would have been way out of our range. Wind forward 14 years and I was watching a video on Clare's website and much to my surprise I saw Richard and Joyce Hall together with Mike Rowland on the video enjoying one of his tours in 2016.

I rang Richard and he said they were considering doing another tour to Tasmania in February 2018 with Peter Gale. I said that we would be interested as well - but Clare would need a minimum of 5 aircraft to make it worthwhile. David & Lavinia Soul were also interested so I put a notice in the March newsletter to see if anyone wanted to make up an FFA Tour and Rick & Laura Holt responded straight away. So we had a group and we pursued Clare to see if he would slightly alter his programme to accommodate meeting up with Neil Unger again at Parkes, as we went to his farm back in 2004. In my best Yorkshire fashion, I tried to beat him down in price as his tours are expensive, made even worse by the exchange rate which had dropped from AUS $2.60 to the pound in 2004 to only $1.60

A price was agreed, the route was agreed and the long process of meeting the bureaucratic side started. We soon learnt why Mal had packed in! The process started in June 2017 with obtaining the security passes called ASICs, in order to go airside on the airfields. This is an annual pass which requires a very lengthy form to be completed, backed up by notarised copies of 3 documents for identification. They will only accept copies of passports etc if stamped by a notary. I found a notary in Scarborough and she charged me £60 per document to put her stamp on the copied documents.

Then in November 2017, we had to obtain CoVs which are certificates of validation of our EASA pilots licences. So back to the notary with copies of medicals, licences, identification etc, this time sent to CASA, the Oz CAA, who then contact our CAA (following another form from us and payment to the Conspiracy Against Aviation) to verify the details.

Eventually, everything was applied for, not forgetting the online visa to enter Australia for which there is another fee. So before we even started, I reckon the paperwork cost me around £700.

For us personally, we planned to spend 3 nights in Dubai to break the 22 hour journey on the way out.

By all different means and routes, 5 FFA couples together with an American couple joined up in Brisbane on February 6th with the tour leader, Clare and the lead pilot, Roger, who was English but had lived in Oz for 10 years after retiring from British Airways as a 747 captain.

Days 1 to 4, February 7th to 10th 2018 - Heading South to Tasmania - Paul Stephens report

Our first morning was taken with a 2 hour drive west to Toowoomba, our base airfield. We were greeted at the Darling Downs Aeroclub by ex president Jack Thompson, himself a 22000 hour pilot. We also met up with our allotted aircraft - a PA28 for the American couple and 172s for Rick, Peter and Richard. David was offered a 182 which he didn't fancy or trust to cross the Tasman Straights. Instead he was presented with a tatty 172, which I think any of us would have rejected. Finally, he took the leader's aircraft, a 182RG. Funny that the organisers didn't take David's assigned 172, but found yet another 182 at another airfield. Roz and I also had a 182.

The rest of the day was a series of talks by Clare, Jack and Roger on basic Oz Aviation Law until we hit overload and retired to the hotel. The next day was check out day on our respective aircraft. I had never flown a 182, but a young girl instructor put me through an hour's handling exercise including 3 stalls, 2 practice forced landings, throwing it about a bit and finally three circuits using the appropriate Common Traffic Advisory Frequency (CTAF) radio calls.

No airfields have control towers in Australia, including most regional airfields, apart from the international big boys' airfields. Calls are broadcast to the airfield traffic announcing your position. This keeps GA costs down and works perfectly well.

We all passed the check rides and were now approved to fly their aircraft, which keeps the insurers happy. After yet another briefing, which Roger managed to make into something which was certainly not brief, one or two of us started to pack up our maps and charts giving the hint that enough was enough.

Everyone is encouraged to use the official moving map display called Oz Runways on iPads or similar. This is like another version of SkyDemon, but officially recognised. Most of our briefings were taken up getting to know how to plan our routes on this software. It has some better features than SkyDemon, but



generally not as user friendly.

At last day 3 came and after yet another 'briefing' that wasn't brief, we were hoping to get an early start for our flight to Parkes which is west of Sydney, stopping for fuel at Narrabri. This was a couple of legs of about 200 miles each. We learnt years ago that it is best to fly early mornings as the sun gets very powerful and by the afternoon, thunderstorms can bubble up.

But still we couldn't go because Jack wanted us to have a block flight plan - he actually agreed it wasn't mandatory, but he was so embroiled in Australian bureaucracy that he did it for us anyway. Oh, and that other essential - the weight and balance diagrams.

Apparently ramp checks are carried out and if the tech log isn't signed after the pre-flight inspection, we haven't completed a weight and balance and we aren't carrying the aforesaid security pass and all paperwork isn't present in the aircraft, we're in bother.

Eventually, they ran out of things they could bombard us with. Richard and Joyce were already on information overload and were taxiing out, closely followed by Roz and myself and gradually the others. I make all these points as it came as a bit of a shock after the easy old days with GOANA, 14 years previously when bureaucracy was minimal and the briefing even less so. With Mal, we rocked up at the airfield, he already had a CoV ready for us, no security passes and his briefings were brief.

Toowoomba, our starting point, is at just over 2000 feet and the air temperature would be in the low forties, so take off performance was steady, especially as our aircraft were full of fuel and with a fair bit of baggage including a folder with about 30 maps in it and a book called ERSA which must have weighed 2 kilos itself which contained plates for every airfield in the country plus a load of other stuff.

Once out of the circuit, we relaxed and settled into the flight taking in the vast Australian countryside. We were flying to the west of the Great Divide over fairly flat countryside mostly livestock farms with vast areas of Eucalyptus 'forests' one of which took 20 minutes to fly over with no where for a forced landing apart from a highway which we kept in sight as an option.

I had suggested that we make use of the chat frequency and using call signs like Safari Richard, Safari Peter etc we kept in touch giving distance to destination and height as position reports.

Narrabri with it's mile long runway was deathly quiet apart from a regional jet which came in. The onward flight to Parkes was very straight forward and equally deserted at the airfield. The refuelling is well sorted with credit card self service. Fuel cost at both these airfields was AUS $2.21 per litre (£1.25 per litre).

Getting the aircraft refuelled and put to bed at Parkes took its toll on us as the temperature was 47 deg C and probably a lot more on the black tarmac. Finally all were gathered together on the bus - but wait a minute, there were strict instructions to close the flight plan to stop the SAR being activated. We thought that as we hadn't opened any flight plan (Jack had filed them for us) there was no need to close them, but each of us had to confirm that we really were at Parkes by telephone and the lead pilot's block call wasn't acceptable.

We did have a visit organised by Neil Unger for that afternoon, but because of all the briefings and going through every radio frequency there was available etc, we were running a couple of hours behind schedule. I rang Neil and he was relaxed about it and wondered what all the fuss was about. He said he applied for an annual security pass 8 years ago and never renewed it. He said in typical Aussie fashion that if he was to fly to Toowoomba, he would even bother getting the map out!

Clare had a good motel sorted for us where they did an excellent dinner. Roger, our ex BA lead pilot wanted a couple of hours for the next day's briefing as he had a full programme of flying including going through a VFR low level corridor following the coast past Sydney and a scenic tour through the harbour area, orbiting near the bridge and opera house. Initially he wanted us to all do individual radio calls, but I suggested we went through as a formation with him leading and doing the radio work. This would be far kinder on the Sydney controller. So this briefing also curtailed our day out with Neil as we had to be back at the motel for his briefing at 16:00.

Our first tour visit was to a friend of Neil's who was a hobby farmer, but had a spelt and buckwheat business. Buckwheat isn't actually wheat at all as it isn't a grass species. But the seeds are used to make gluten free bread. Spelt is an original wheat and only has 7 chromosomes as opposed to modern wheats which have 21 chromosomes. Consequently it is low in gluten and favoured by the 'organic' sort of customer, although the term organic is different to our crops which are grown chemically free.

He then took us to his farm where he showed us his shearing shed and explained the quality of Merino wool. We were joined by Andrew, an ex Pom, who had packed in his tenancy of a farm very near Peter Gale's and took up the Aussie challenge and bought a few thousand acres at about £300 an acre, then suffered 4 years of drought with virtually no crop. Once he regained his losses in the following years, he jacked out and rented the land to 3 different farmers and became a landlord with a steady income.

Next stop was the famous Parkes telescope which is just beside some of Neil's land. We had lunch in the restaurant and saw a 3D film about the telescope, Mars and the Universe.

Next stop was Wimmera, which is one of Neil's farms where he has his hangar and runway. Now Neil is an extremely bright and



grounded man, but he just can't resist telling us how badly he is doing and how every crop is a failure. I call him the biggest liar in Australia which he probably, or hopefully takes as a compliment. I couldn't be an Australian farmer because unlike the UK, they don't always get a harvest. In the time I have known Neil, he had 4 years of drought before our last visit in 2014, he had a plague of mice which climbed up the stems and ate the grain, he had the great fire in 2004 which took virtually all his crops the day before he started harvest, then conversely he has had floods at planting time and not got it all sown. He even complains of kangaroos flattening hundreds of acres and locusts swarms.

He showed us his self built Glastar aircraft into which he has installed a Mazda rotary producing about 220 hp. He made his own reduction gearbox and fabricated his own cowling to accommodate the cooling system. We went on to see his home farm, Cawdor and his brother's farm next door.

Here I got to speak with his nephew, an extremely turned on young man who told me some more realistic figures of yields and prices. They look for a 1.5 to 2 tonne yield for wheat and a bit

less than a tonne of Canola (OSR). They have a ryegrass problem like our black grass problem and have similar resistance issues to chemicals. Their inputs are extremely low and cultivation's are either direct or minimal. This is mainly to conserve moisture. They hadn't heard of any glyphosate ban and reckoned they couldn't farm without it.

They operate on a controlled traffic regime with most machines being 12 metres wide. The Australians have always been ahead of us with GPS and he explained that to keep the huge rig of the seed box, followed by the 12 metre air cultivator drill and even followed by an anhydrous ammonia box, all towed by a 600hp Challenger, they run a GPS receiver on the tractor and another on the drill to keep it running straight.

Their combines were Case rotaries which do about 500 hours a year each and they change them at about 5000 hours. Planting starts on April 20th ideally with the Canola, then the wheat and harvest starts in November. Neil has two blocks totalling 8500 acres run by his son and one employed man and his brother has a similar acreage. They don't share machinery much, but help each other out if necessary.

Then it was return to the motel for the dreaded briefing. To be fair, it was a fairly intense route, but our ex BA captain should maybe have taken a bit more control as everyone had all the maps out which consisted of quarter million, half million and one million for all sectors of this 500 mile flight. On top of that there was the routing on the Oz Landings programme. After 2.5 hours, dinner was put back as we were over running the schedule.

At that point, Roz and I got a telephone call that we didn't want. Our daughter Katie had come to grief on a horse and had been thrown into a fence, breaking her leg into 22 pieces. The fact that the NHS surgeons had made a mess of the operation made the decision easy to return home ASAP as she was being moved to someone who knew what they were doing in London.

Clare asked us if we could take the PA28 back to Toowoomba as the Americans were overheating in the low wing. We had a good flight back with a strong tailwind and we rescheduled the airline tickets home. We were pretty gutted, but our focus was on our daughter.

Paul Stephens

Days 4 to 7, February 11th to 14th 2018 - The flight to Hobart - David Soul's report

Days 4 and 5 involved some fairly intensive flying with about 5 hours plus each day. Sunday took us first to Luskintyre (Ozlus) a small, very brown grass strip 4m NW of Maitland. Peter Gale's 172 caught a bug in its pitot tube, early in the flight and he lost airspeed indication altogether. We sorted it at the field. The airfield had an interesting collection of aircraft including an Avenger and about 20 privately owned Tiger Moths, some in as new condition. About a dozen lady bikers were congregated at the airfield wooden shack/ cafe, on a ride out from Newcastle. They were sporting rainbow ribbons on their breasts which indicted their LGBTA leanings I was reliably informed!

The trip down the east coast was stunning with a crocodile detour into Sydney Harbour to view the bridge and Opera House. Low cloud prevented us maintaining the obligatory 1500 ft but no one seemed to mind.

We ended up, after another VFR corridor through controlled airspace, later than intended, at the remotest village in Victoria - Mallacoota. We enjoyed dinner at the local long established Lucy's Chinese restaurant, where beer and wine restored our blood sugars to acceptable levels and spirits to euphoric.

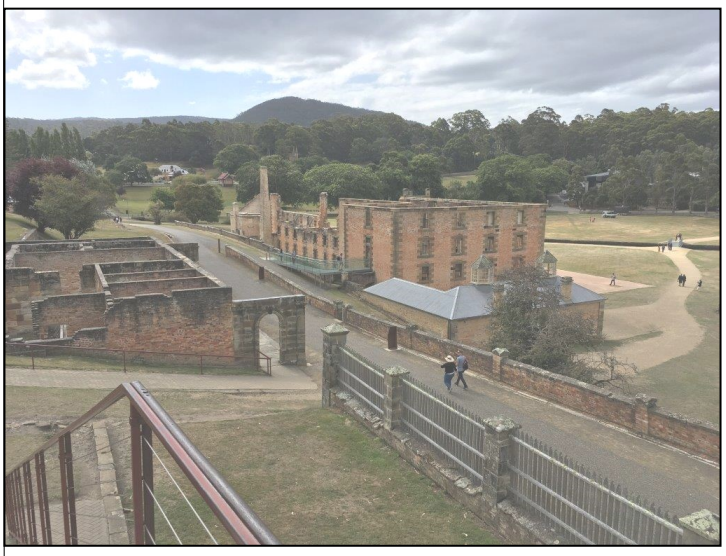
Next day, after another lengthy briefing!, we eventually set off at mid-day to Flinders Island, which is most of the way across the Tasman Sea to Tasmania. The sea crossing at up to 5500 ft was good with land visible most of the time, even if the tiny islands on route would have offered little succour in the event of a forced landing. The southern mainland coast was stunning. Our lead pilot, Roger, checked in with 'the squadron' every 10 minutes on 123.45, to see that all was well with us and then reported 'Opps normal' to Melbourne Central.

After a packed lunch and refuel at Flinders, plus a briefing, we set off for Hobart following the very scenic east coast all the way down. Some of us took a few low level sight seeing diversions to view various sea cliffs and rock formations, but all arrived within a few minutes of the leader at Cambridge Airport, Hobart. A minibus was waiting for us on arrival and after tying the aircraft



down and filling in the various logs we departed for our stay at the very salubrious, Grand Chancellor Hotel, downtown. Dinner followed at the award winning Da Angelo Ristorante. Too much food!

Day 6 and we had an interesting and exciting boat trip offshore in high powered aluminium hulled boats this morning, viewing seals, dolphins and sea birds, with exploratory diversions into the



coastal caves and rock formations. The bus ride to departure was a bit hairy, swaying around the Tasmanian bends and accelerating down the hills to acquire sufficient momentum to ascend the subsequent upslope, but we survived despite one or two of the party feeling seasick. The boat ride, although exciting, didn't induce the same queasiness.

Our afternoon was taken up with a visit to Port Arthur Penitentiary. The cells in the so called Separate Prison adjacent to the Asylum, exuded an atmosphere of despair and one could well

imagine the anguish prisoners in the mid 1800's would have felt when being transferred here. Sensory deprivation was part of the rehabilitation process, with the prisoners wearing a face mask and the body guards wearing socks to ensure a silent environment. The prisoners were forbidden to communicate with each other and were even segregated during the obligatory Sunday service with wooden panels between their seats.

The prison was used for repeat offenders only and took convicts from all states in Australia.

We had a lovely dinner in the Mures seafood restaurant. Unfortunately the service was pretty awful with some of us having to wait 2 hours before food was served. After some softening up by me with messages to the manager, I am hopeful Clare will be negotiating a significant discount on the price paid.

David Soul

Days 8 to 11, 15th to 18th February 2018 - Tasmania

First Ricks report who took most of the following photos

On our free day in Hobart we visited the wildlife sanctuary in Hobart. I was particularly interested in the Tassie Devil. This animal was raised as a cub having been rescued from it's mother's pouch after she was killed on the road. Though still quite common their numbers have been declining due to a disease which affects the face and is transmitted when they feed.



They are now the top predator in Tas since the 'tiger' became extinct in the 1930's. They feed by several animals pulling at the carcass together in a frenzied noisy fashion. This display gave the name devil. In the sanctuary they attach a bungee cord to the meat to help them eat. Since their numbers have declined more road kill, mainly wallabies, are evident. They also kept wombats which are not endangered and delighted in telling us about their square poo. This used to mark their territory and being square doesn't roll downhill!



A view of Hobart harbour from our hotel room

Peter Gales's story flying from Hobart to Cradle Mountain

Hobart is the capital of Tasmania and was the most Southerly stop on our tour. From here we routed North back to our base at Toowoomba. On Feb 15th our group of six aircraft took off from Hobarts Cambridge YCBG airport inbound to Davenport YDPO on the North Coast. The usual route is via the picturesque West coast but high winds and low cloud decreed that we take the more sheltered route through the centre of Tasmania which was similar terrain to the centre of the UK. A 35kt headwind at 15' crosswind made for a challenging landing and with no ground effect from the high wings of a C172 it was certainly out of my comfort zone. We tied down and the coach took us the 1.5 hour trip to Cradle Mountain Lodge.

We were next airborne Feb 17th from Davenport for King Island YKII on a flight plan which is covered by Roger Hendry our tour lead aircraft. In Australia when on a flight plan over the sea the lead aircraft does an all's well call on the talk through frequency and then does a 10 minute report to the radar controller.

There is no LARS service for GA because it would have to be paid for. Therefore the only time you talk to a radio controller is when you are on a flight plan or when you need to fly through controlled airspace of a large commercial airport which is rare. All other airfields have no radio controller. They use a talk through frequency where you make blind calls of your position and your intention to land on your chosen runway and wait for other traffic to identify themselves. Seems strange talking directly to small passenger Jets and large twins and giving way to them when they are on a 10 mile final.

Three escaped convicts on Cradle mountain (Rick, David & Roger)! It was very wet and gusty, around 10C, quite a contrast to Parkes.



Some facts I made a note of at King Island by Richard Hall

Driest summer in living memory.

Population about 1500. Used to be 4500

About 8 dairy farms, used to be nearly 200

The Farm we visited, Gary milked 500 cows in a herringbone parlour almost exactly the same as the one I spent 35 years in! His

milk goes to the cheese factory

However the cows stay outside, he is continuously irrigating from boreholes which never dry up. Grows crops to supplement grass, or lack of, and strip grazes them.

With moving electric fences and irrigation pipes each day he said he runs 10-15 km each day which keeps him so fit that he has achieved first place in an annual Island run that he helps to organise!

All but one dairy farm supplies to King Island cheese factory which produces 6 tonnes a day. One Farm provides fresh milk for the island.

40,000 beef cattle provide 23% of Tasmania production worth $AUS 70 Million

The farmer we visited? Character! Told us all about it. Virtually organic. Pleased with dry weather because less parasites. Not intensive like dairy, but good grassland management by continually moving stock around paddocks. Well fenced. ie like New Zealand.

The cheese and and beef are known for their high quality throughout the world.

The air is certainly clean - and fresh! We had plenty of it. Most



of us felt that we would not like to live in Tasmania, but glad we have been there.

Golf is their growing industry with the no 1 and no 4 golf courses on King Island

AUD $2 million upgrade to airport in anticipation of of growing tourism. (Most of the airfields we landed at had excellent facilities in Australia)



A profitable industry is Kelp. 2 men can collect 1000 fronds a day, worth $1 each from the beach. It is dried outside on racks for 2 weeks, then processed by grinding with a hammer mill to a powder then most of it is exported to Scotland.

Days 9 to 16, 19th to 22nd February - back on the Mainland and back to Peter

We took off from King Island on Feb 19th inbound to Lake Mungo YLMU, on a flight plan over the sea crossing until we reach the mainland coastline where we see the eroded rocks of the 12 apostles (now reduced to nine). This was a very scenic route and we were instructed to fly at 1000ft QFE as oncoming traffic was flying at 1500ft, 500 ft above and helicopter traffic 500ft below!! At least the viz was good and I'm sure I saw the whites of one helicopters pilot's eyes!

We refuelled at Warrnambool YWBL then headed north for another refuel at Mildura YMIA before landing on a dirt/gravel strip at Mungo Lodge. This is when we wished we had started out earlier as it was past midday and very hot, sticky and lots of turbulence. The countryside is dry arid with little vegetation and we were all pleased to get tied down at Mungo Lodge and into our air conditioned chalets.

We departed Mungo Lodge next day after lunch, it was + 40'C on a 900m dirt/gravel strip, aircraft well loaded! Forget the textbook full throttle brakes off we were taught by our instructors. The technique is checks complete, backtrack, rolling turn, feed the power in gradually, yoke back to keep the prop off the gravel and as the speed rises ease off the back pressure on the yoke to kill drag and at 600m I rotated for a slow climb, trees at the end of the strip and my underwear completely intact. After another hot uncomfortable turbulent flight we landed at Louth YLOH and transfer to the café/bar for a cool beer while we wait for out host to take us to Trilby Station.

Rick continues

When times are hard, like now at Trilby, it costs $20,000 per week to feed the 27000 sheep (on 320,000 acres!). End to end the farm is 100km and they use a C172. At the moment their income is from feral goats which can fetch $80 and are sold to the Muslims. Here is a nice big one pinching the cotton seed for the sheep. The whole farm has gravity fed water for the animals.

We saw several flocks of emus on the farm at Trilby station. They distract the mother away from her egg to steal it. One emu egg is equivalent to 12 hen's eggs and make very good cakes.

The emu will replace the egg within a week.





Peter continues...

On Feb 22nd we set off North East on our last flight back to base at Toowoomba YTWB, refuelling after 30mins at Bourke YBKE followed by 3hrs 50mins. As usual we had a headwind but by midday the cloud had filled in and the countryside got greener and more interesting and the long flight was very pleasant. En-route we were chatting on the talk frequency when we heard two other Ozy pilots "Hey mate did you hear those couple of yanks and some pommes on the RT" David Soul engaged in conversation and we found they were "Agri-Tractors" or crop sprayers in English. We also confirmed that the large areas of flood irrigation crops we had viewed were all cotton fields. To prepare us for our home coming there was low cloud and rain at Toowoomba so we slower C172's had to land 10 miles short at Wellcamp for 30mins while the cloud lifted.

After 31 hours in a C172 VH-KIT I return home with some wonderful memories, somewhere between Sydney and Hobart I passed my 1000hrs as P1. It would be difficult to choose one venue as the best because each was great in its own environment but from the flying it has to be taking my own pictures of Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Opera House. For me "The Holiday of a Lifetime"



Two fencers on Trilby station lived in this old bus for many years up until the 1980's

Richard's Summary

Roger did improve a lot and learned from Paul's skills with Oz Runways and emailed the routes to us - the briefings became briefer! He handled the radio for the group quite well through the VFR routes around the most congested airspaces. David helped him out a few times - Roger's radio was not good.

The whole trip kept to schedule with luck with the weather. There were some days we couldn't have flown. We did fly in strong wind conditions which made some passengers uncomfortable.

The sea crossings and coastal views were amazing. We all loved them. Boring and bumpy at times inland. The only difficult bit was our return to Toowoomba due to rain. 4 planes diverted to another airfield nearby which was 500 ft lower but for only a short time.

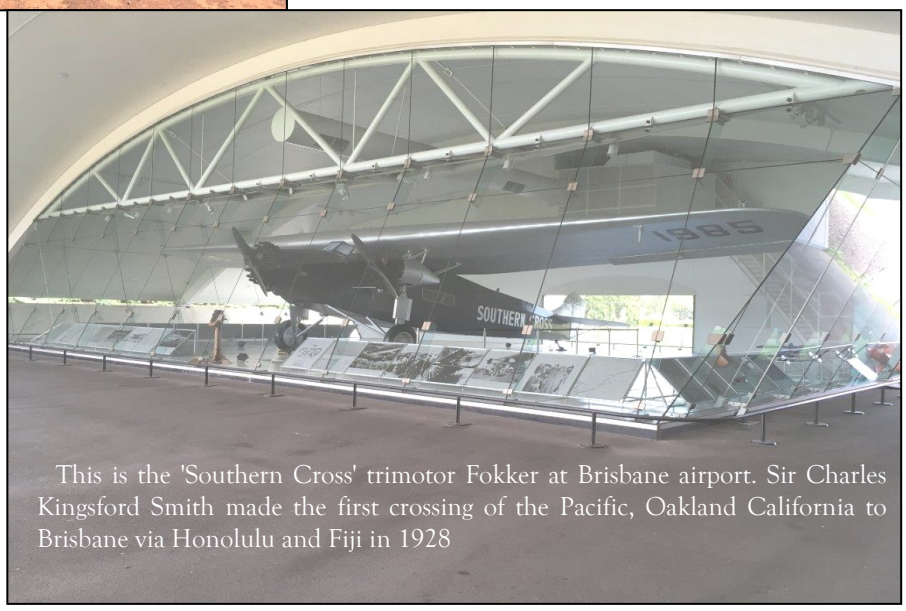
So, Clare's organisation worked out well. The food and accommodation was variable due to location. Top quality in the city to more basic in the outback, as would be expected.

It was expensive. The impression I got from all I spoke to was that it was worth it for the unique experience.

Footnote - you can view Clare McEwan's website at https://www.airsafarisint.com/

There looks to be an interesting tour in Canada from Toronto to the Rockies, up to the Alaska border and the Arctic Circle and back. Let me know if you are interested in any of the tours and I will coordinate with Clare.

Paul Stephens



This is the 'Southern Cross' trimotor Fokker at Brisbane airport. Sir Charles Kingsford Smith made the first crossing of the Pacific, Oakland California to Brisbane via Honolulu and Fiji in 1928