
FLYING FARMERS ASSOCIATION
GUOMAN HOTELS
Newsletter No. 112
March 2013

Opening Thoughts

Chairman's Ramblings

What a year that was. The contrast between one end and the other has probably never been so great within our lifetime – and let's hope we never see another like it.

But now we have had nearly a fortnight without rain – certainly here in East Anglia, and what a difference that has made. Still jolly cold, certainly, but farms all around the area are drilling, spraying and fertilizing and getting on with what we do best, and that is producing top-notch food for our ever-expanding population. We shall put last year's trials and tribulations behind us and look forward to a new one and the varied challenges it will undoubtedly bring us. Good luck to you all.

It was good to catch up again with many of you who rose to the invitation to our first event of the New Year, a fascinating morning discovering the history and the workings of London's Tower Bridge, followed by a group lunch in a local restaurant to warm us up from the very chilly temperatures of the day. Well done, and thank you to Rick Holt, our Events Secretary for arranging an excellent start to our 2013 events calendar.

More great events are in the pipeline, many of the earlier ones already being fully subscribed, and the later ones in the advanced planning stages. Don't miss out by delaying your application for those events that have not yet closed – most have a numbers limit which can create disappointment for those who apply too late to be accepted.

Another great foreign Study Tour has been arranged by our Secretary, Paul Stephens, who has formulated three parts to it to help those who cannot spare the either the time or the finance to enjoy the whole tour. We owe Paul a great debt of gratitude for all the work he has put (and still is putting) into the organisation for this event – it can at times be a frustrating, thankless task, but the response by the many who are booked to go on the tour makes the planning all seem so worthwhile.

The days are lengthening noticeably, the clocks go forward within a couple of weeks, the temperatures are rising (so welcome after the recent static high pressure over the country bringing the bitter Easterly winds from Siberia – so eloquently known by the met: men as "The Beast from the East"), and for those of us lucky enough to have our own airstrips, the soil is drying out. I plan to give my strip its first haircut this week which is the start of a long labour of love all through the flying season, but is a small price to pay for the considerable privilege of having your own airstrip on your doorstep. Long may that privilege remain.

I look forward to meeting up with many of you again very soon at many of this year's events – our first event is but a few weeks away.

Martin Goslin
3/03/2013

GAAC Report

The General Aviation Awareness Council (GAAC) continues to do battle on behalf of General Aviation (GA); that's us! The Working Group on which I represent the FFA meets three times a year.

Over recent months concerns have centred on Wind Farms, Regulation, Airfields, and Charging.

Wind Farms

These have become an increasing concern as they can seriously affect flight safety when positioned near airfields, VRPs or grass strips. The planning system appears weak as there is pressure from the government and developers who are keen to push projects through with as little opposition as possible. There is also an issue with "clutter" to ATC radar. Anemometer masts are also a serious hazard as they can appear without notice and are very difficult to see. The GAAC recommends that strip owners should "safeguard" their strips by registering with the local planning authorities – this is not a popular measure with those FFA members who wish to keep their operations discrete.

Regulation

The GAAC monitors all new and proposed legislation which has an impact on GA. It is in regular contact with the CAA, MPs, the Dft and other regulators and policy makers, putting GA's case. Issues covered were the London Olympics, noise level monitoring at airfields, N registered aircraft, etc.

Airfields

There has been an increase in concern over recent months concerning the threat to GA airfields. The Government's aim to speed up planning decisions was of particular concern. The closure of Filton Aerodrome near Bristol will not have gone unnoticed by FFA members. An ever increasing number of enquiries was being received by the GAAC and that the total number of airfield matters had now exceeded 200.

Charging

There was concern that the new charges imposed by the CAA were likely to cause problems for the Historic Aircraft association among others and that some aircraft had already chosen to have their maintenance carried out in Holland due to high UK costs, with the potential for lost income.

The Chairman pointed out that the costs of conversion from a Registered Training Facility to an Approved Training Organisation required by EASA were disproportionate and would lead to the same outcome as he had predicted for Integrated Training Schools. His forecast was that all Integrated schools would move their operations offshore in whole or part or be forced into liquidation had now taken place and was proof that the high costs of training in the UK, due in no small part to charges from the CAA, would lead to diminishing returns for both the CAA and UK business. He pointed out that the current cost of £105 for an RTF could escalate to £2,000 - £3,000 subject to the number of ratings to be approved and the audit cost of £175 per hour charged by the CAA.

"Compulsory" handling at airfields, with often unreasonably high charges is of on-going concern.

Anthony Kedros

GASCo Report

Meeting at AAIB, Farnborough, 29th February 2013

The main subject of the meeting was the fact that the CAA have awarded the publication of safety material to the publishers of Pilot magazine, thereby removing their funding of the GASCo Flight Safety magazine. The results of the online survey that some of you may completed was encouraging with 40% of respondents stating they would be prepared to pay £16 a year to continue receiving Flight Safety. The "break even" point is 1500 issues at this price, and GASCo have decided to risk continuing for a year on this basis to test the water, also looking at new delivery methods

(eg iPhone app, email etc).

There was a lecture by Mike Bromfield of Coventry University who are looking at offering one day safety workshops on various issues such as human factors and loss of control, all interesting stuff.

There have been 45 safety evenings this winter, also ditching and Met Office workshops, and GASCo intends to have a presence at Popham fair, AeroExpo, LAA rally, Helitech and the Flying Show as well as the AOPA day at Duxford.

A takeoff/landing performance app is being developed and some time was also given to the merits or otherwise of parachutes in GA and the impending (but not yet publicised) overhaul of the LARS network.

Arguably the most pertinent point raised for our membership was the awful nature of this winters weather (tell us something we don't know!) and the impact the layoff may have on both pilots currency and aircraft serviceability. Worth a thought!

Mark Badminton

London 2013

For our Winter meeting, Rick Holt had organised a conducted tour of Tower Bridge, London. Over 40 members met at the visitor centre and were split into 2 groups on a cool but sunny day.

We took a lift up the North tower and watched a well prepared presentation using holographic characters set in 1876, discussing

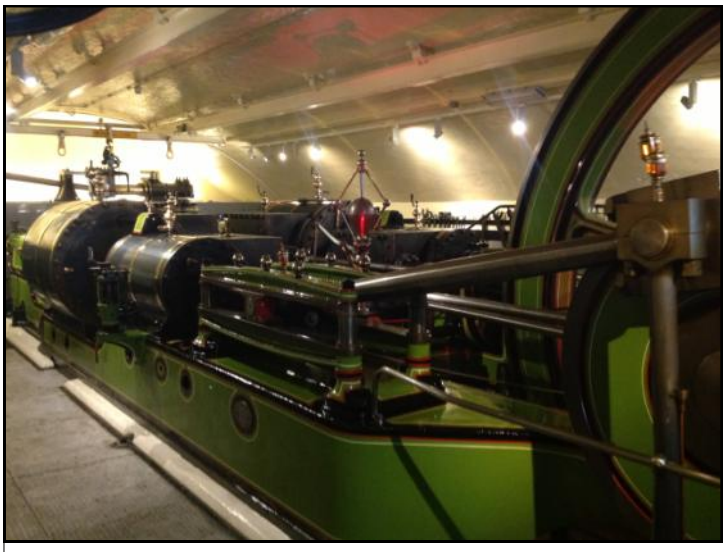


why and how a bridge should be constructed.

Construction was started in 1886 and opened by the Prince of Wales, Edward VII on 30th June 1894. An extra bridge was needed as there was increased commercial development in the East End of London. But, there had to be provision for the tall masted ships to get access to the port facilities in the Pool of London.

Our tour took us along one of the walkways between the towers. They were once open to the elements and gained a bad reputation as a haunt for prostitutes and pick pockets. They are now all sealed up with double glazing and heated. In fact they were holding a photographic exhibition of worldwide bridges in the walkway and they are now used as an unusual place to have your corporate entertainment diners.

We progressed to the tower on the South bank to see another presentation of the bridge construction and then onto the engine room where we saw the two 360 hp stationary steam engines



which use accumulators and water at 750 psi to lift the counter balanced bascules which weigh over 1000 tonnes each. They can be raised in about 1 minute. Steam gave way to electric / hydraulic power in 1974.

After our meeting, we had a group lunch in a nearby restaurant which was very good and very welcome.

We went our seperate ways, some going to the nearby Shard to pay their £24.95 pp for a view of London, others going straight home and the FFA Committee going to the Farmers Club for their biannual committee meeting

Paul Stephens

Air Racing Success

Gordon Bellerby had great success with Air Racing this year and is seen in the photo below, receiving his King's Cup trophy (and three other trophies at the same time) at the Air Racing symposium at the weekend.

The man second from left is his navigator David Lee (a Yorkshire bank manager who we will meet at Gordon's FFA meeting event on April 23rd). The actual Kings Cup is the one held by the girl nearest Gordon on the right hand side.

He receives the trophy 'officially' from HRH Prince Andrew at the aviation presentations at the RAF Club on Tuesday April 22nd (rather inconveniently, the evening before his Yorkshire event).



Programme 2013

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



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.

Fens Pumping Station and Rod Herbert's Factory, Wednesday 15th May 2013

Wendy Burton and George Sly are organising this event. Here is Wendy's introduction to the event:-

"St.Germans's has a website but briefly the building of the new station was chaired by Bill for 5 years; unfortunately it was officially opened two months after he died.

It is Norfolk's biggest pumping station and protects thousands of homes and farmland in Norfolk and Cambridgeshire, which are below sea level, from flooding.

Bill flew some of the committee to Holland to view a similar project before the build. We also spent many Sunday afternoons flying in G-CRUZ over the build to make sure it was progressing !!!

Rod Herbert is very busy with a changed direction into making and supplying many airports with new baggage handling set ups (I am sure he would explain that better)

It will be a very interesting day, especially as some years ago Bill took the FFA to the old pumping station and the difference from then and now is amazing.

A reply slip is included with this newsletter with a closing date of 15th April. The cost for the event is £15.00 pp. George Sly will be handling the entries.

Agrovista, Leicester, 21st June 2013

Rob Purvis from Agrovista explains the proposed arrangements for the day :-

Our trial site is about a mile from Leicester airport where you will be landing. The Stoughton Estate farm manager will give an overview of the Co-operative farms activities and will give an introduction to the Stoughton Estate including its Farm to Fork project, which is designed to educate children on where their food comes from.

There will then be a guided tour of some of Agrovista's trials work, including winter wheat varieties, fungicide interaction and application technology work. It would also be possible to look at our oilseed rape establishment work which includes seed rate and row width interaction and companion planting.

The Estate address is:-
Co-operative Farms
Stoughton Estate
Oadby lodge Farm
Gartree Road
Leicester
LE2 2FG

We would be more than happy to supply a buffet style lunch in one of the farm meeting rooms courtesy of Agrovista. Would you be happy to pay for the coach from the airfield and then on into Leicester if you wish to visit the National Space Centre?

Rick Holt will be handling the entries, so please send reply slips to him with a cheque for £20 to cover the transport costs and possibly the Space Centre entry as well. Closing date is the 21st May. Those that do not want to visit the space centre could be dropped off at the airfield.

Information for the other events was published in the December newsletter and can also be found on the website www.ffa.org.uk

Joined since 15th July 2012

FFA Number	Strip
8527	Bob Walker, Scarborough
8529	David Dewey, Ely

The total membership is now 399