FLYING FARMERS NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 1975

Our mid-summer meeting was a great success.

Thirty two aircraft carrying forty six members arrived at Fred Spencer's airstrip at Banbury and apart from causing just a little chaos to the Upper Heyford M.A.T.Z. we were all safely on the ground and lined up by 10.30.

The weather more than made up for the appalling day we had at Leeds/Bradford and apart from just a little mist in the early morning I don't think many of us saw a cloud all day - although I believe our Chairman was 'on top' for the first thirty miles of Welsh mountains.

As we had postponed our A.G.M. from Leeds/Bradford it was unanimously agreed that we complete these formalities before going on to Twyfords Seeds and Sywell.

Having completed 'any other business' we climbed into a coach, and were driven to 'Twyfords Seeds' where we were shown how oil seed rape and flax varieties were selected for seed. It was all very interesting although I, personally, am not convinced that oil seed rape would be a viable crop for many of us. Anyway, our thanks to Fred Spencer for organising the trip, also for acting as our host for the morning.

By one o'clock all the aircraft had left Fred's strip for Sywell and within a few minutes were lined up in front of the excellent restaurant.

After lunch we again boarded a coach, this time for a visit to the Northampton College of Agriculture. It was here that one of our newest members, Chris Whittles, showed us around the cereal plots which were his personal responsibility. The whole demonstration was very well displayed and my congratulations to Chris for giving us such a very interesting afternoon. I did not want to go back, and look at my own cereals which were miserable compared with some of Chris' treated plots, and I'm still bewildered by the cocktails of Fungicides which can be used on different varieties, also the costs involved.

After tea and biscuits, David Corbett proposed a vote of thanks, and by five o'clock we were back at Sywell, and soon afterwards most aircraft had left for home.

My thanks again to Fred Spencer and Chris Whittles and the Principal of his college for helping to organise such an interesting day, also booking coaches etc.

My apologies for not asking A.T.C. for a block rate for landing fees, next time I will remember.

Enclosed with this Newsletter is a copy of our first year's accounts also some advice from Wing Commander Holmes, which has some useful tips for all who own an airstrip.

Finally I hope all of you can get to Cranfield on Thursday, September 4th. C.I.B.A. - Geigy have gone to a great deal of trouble to put on an interesting afternoon for us. Please come - Cranfield is a big airfield so try and fill those passenger seats.

Meanwhile the very best to all of you for the 1975 harvest, even though it does not look like breaking any records.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Thursday September 4th at 14.30 hrs (local) at Cranfield by invitation of Flight and C.I.B.A. - Geigy. A film, and then a talk on current research and development in aerial operations.

THE USE OF PRIVATE LAND BY PRIVATE AIRCRAFT FOR PRIVATE PURPOSES

by

AN ANCIENT AVIATOR, OWNER AND INSURANCE BROKER

So you have a small aeroplane and a nice field on your Estate/Farm, which you use for taking off and landing.

You have friends who would also like to use the field provided that you have no objection. You have none. In fact you would be pleased to see your field used by friendly Private aviators but most certainly do not wish to become in any way or form involved in the worries and troubles arising due to their having "come unstuck" when using the field.

What do you do about it?

Well for a start have nothing to do with P.P.O. It's a snare and a delusion which will almost certainly land you in all the Inquiries, proceedings and possibly litigation resulting from someone getting into trouble when using the field.

Furthermore, P.P.O. provides you with no defence and could lead to your being held responsible for the incident, not necessarily an accident, legally and financially.

Just tell anyone who asks that they may use the field at their own risk and must themselves look out for animals, particularly horses, and people working in the field and for obstructions of all kinds, which may vary from hour to hour and not to land or take off unless they are quite sure that all is well.

Oh, and add, with emphasis too, that they will be held responsible for any loss or damage that you may suffer or may arise as a consequence of their using your field.

Then if someone using your field kills your prize ram which has just won you £150. and in doing so "bends" his prop, undercarriage and himself YOU SUE HIM for damaging your property. He cannot sue you. If you had known that he was going to use the field you would have made sure that it was clear of people, animals and obstructions.

We allowed a field at home to be used on these conditions for about thirty years without trouble and I know of several other fields that were in permanent use on these lines.

It is most important not to have a windsock or landing "T" anywhere. There was once an aviator who came over to land at a private field and saw the "T" pointing in one direction and the windsock in the other. Thinking that the owner had forgotten to change the "T" he decided to land according to the windsock, and was unable to stop in time before crashing into the far fence. Only after landing did he see that the windsock had blown down and was lying on the ground. He had landed down-wind, which is never advisable, especially on a short field.

AND NO boundary markers. If there is any soft ground put hurdles around it - not to warn a visiting pilot of course, merely to keep stock away from that part of the field.

Have a flag on a Barn, or on the house or someplace where it can be easily seen from the air but cannot by any chance be taken for a windsock and/or taken as an invitation to land an aircraft.

An insurance against claims by Third Parties using a field on these lines can be obtained at quite a reasonable premium.

The risk of a claim, provided that there is no P.P.O., is very small. In forty years only two small claims can be remembered and one of these would not have arisen if the nitwit responsible had not threated to sue. If he had kept quiet and done a "lost dog act" his aircraft would have been repaired and nothing said. Instead he was held responsible and got himself landed with paying for a Jeep which ran into him as well as his own aricraft repairs. The whole case hinged on the fact that if he had NOT landed the "accident" could not have occurred.