THE FLYING FARMERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER - SUMMER 1979

Firstly - some overdue apologies:

From the Chairman:

I am very sorry that I have not been able to do anything for members so far this year but I have had family and farm problems which have taken up a great deal of my time.

I have also had to contend with a lot of rain. We are used to rain here, 1,200mm. a year is normal, but 1979 has excelled itself with over 300mm. in May alone. I was looking forward to staying in Somerset with a sister for the Royal Bath and West. My wife and I planned to fly down but although ATC Yeovil were most welcoming, gave me the QFE and wind and visibility and raised my spirits greatly, they concluded with "Of course there is one snag." "Oh" I replied "What's that?". "Well the field is closed because we are flooded". RNAS Yeovilton were equally welcoming but could not allow any strange aeroplanes to remain inside the perimeter overnight, so that was that and I had to drive. The first day was memorable and well up to the best Welsh standards; it was a half hour drive to Shepton Mallet; it took us over three hours and 124 miles to get home again through the floods. Perhaps other members have experienced flooding too.

The Honorary Secretary is doing his best to make plans for meetings, but like the rest of us he is a farmer and has had his own share of the problems of this unpredictable 1979.

Mr. Pelly, who arranged the FFA airfield insurance scheme, has reported that although some of those participating send in their premium on time, about one third of the total do not and this is prejudicing the cover we all get. Please might I ask that those who do participate in the FFA Members Airfield Cover let him have their premium as soon as it is demanded?

Hoping that you have a good harvest and a trouble-free second half to the year.

Yours,

John Williams-Wynne

Peniarth
Tywyn Merioneth
Gwynedd

And from the Hon. Secretary:

I can only humbly apologise to all members, especially those who have telephoned for news and either got a "holding" reply, or none at all. Little did I know, when I took up my duties in December last year, and published the first newsletter, that in early January I would become solely responsible for the aviation group of a local company which had over-stretched itself and wanted to get out of aviation in a hurry. As a result, I found myself taking over our local maintainance and hangerage company; an air-taxi business and a flying school, both in Birmingham; and a closed down crop-spraying business with five Pawnees for disposal. In retrospect, I find it hard to analyse why I got involved - but disposal of the various businesses, without, as far as possible, any redundancies has taken up a disproportionate amount of my time over the last five months. I still have an embarrassing number of aeroplanes to get rid of - see later in the letter.

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This challenge, combined with one's normal day-to-day problems, such as the winter; forming a new Club at Shobdon and starting off a new General Manager for the Airfield at Shobdon; and sorting out the accounting and other problems of the maintainance company, mean that not only have my routine farming activities suffered - but so, regrettably, have my efforts on behalf of the Association.

To cap it all, I have been up before the "beaks" in two different parts of the country during the last three weeks for speeding; and on both occasions I have been disqualified for three months. So, I am now back on my bicycle again until December. I will never learn.

FUTURE VISITS

(i) A Velcourt Farm, Watton, Norfolk

On Wednesday 4th July, we have been invited to fly in to a Velcourt farm at Watton, in Norfolk. We will be met and conducted around the farm by Mr. John Davies, General Manager, Velcourt Ltd., and by Mr. John Leach, Manager of Little Cressingham Farm which we will be visiting. The farm is 1500 acres of light sand over chalk, growing primarily lucerne for grass drying. The farm is also the second largest maize growing unit in the U.K. with 500 acres. The maize is also dried and cubed. The other arable enterprise is winter barley. There are no livestock.

Please time your arrival to land between 1030 and 1100 local on 4th July. The visit will last until approximately 1600, with farm transport provided, and lunch at a local pub.

Parking of aircraft at the strip may be congested, and therefore I would like to be able to give our hosts some idea of numbers of visitors before the end of the previous week.

Please therefore telephone one of the following numbers during the previous week to say how many people are coming, in how many aircraft:

056881 351 (my office) 0900 - 1300 only
056881 452 (Shobdon Aviation Ltd., - Mrs. Tighe) 0900 - 1700 daily

Details of the landing strip are as follows:

Grass Strip: 750m. North/South, with windsock
Coordinates: 52° 33' N 00° 45' E
Farm Office Tel. 0953881577 (Mr. Leach)

Strip is located on North edge of Danger Area D208. All aircraft MUST keep clear of this danger area.
Visiting aircraft must contact Honington Military CTR on 129.05 MCS. Positioning assistance will be available from Honington.

(ii) To British Aerospace at Filton

This visit has had to be temporarily postponed - the problem being that B. Ae. cannot at present accept a large contingent of visiting aircraft owing to resurfacing. To make this visit, we would have to land at Lulsgate and go by coach. I do not consider this to be worth while, unless we can combine another visit in the Bristol area. B. Ae. would only want us for two hours. So far, I cannot find a suitable "second half" to the visit.

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(iii) Overseas Visit

After much correspondence with Edward Long, it has been decided not to go ahead with the visit to John Deere at Mannheim this year. This is partly because of expense, and partly because their tractor factory is closed to visitors for the season, and only the combine factory could be seen. We are advised to wait until the tractor factory reopens. Therefore, we are now looking at a possible visit to Brittany, centred on the Sambron factory. For reasons of time (the French block holiday month) this could not now take place until September.

Would any members be interested in an overseas trip then - or are we all too involved with harvest?

(iv) Further U.K. visits - 1979

We will try to get at least two more visits organised within U.K. this season.

(v) A note for your diary:

Please note that on 16th January 1980, the R.A.S.E. are planning to hold one of their one-day winter conferences on the subject "The Role of Aviation in Agriculture". Our Association has been invited to take an active part in this conference, and the Chairman and I will be meeting the R.A.S.E. organiser during the Royal Show to develop the programme. Any suggestions or ideas from members will be most welcome.

Finally - the Questionnaire and Membership List.

Members will remember that a questionnaire was sent out in December 1978 to all members. Amongst other information requested, were details of landing strips, addresses, etc., etc.,

Unfortunately, the response to the questionnaire has not been sufficiently encouraging to enable us to produce the membership list and map which had been intended.

I am therefore enclosing with this newsletter a further copy of part of the questionnaire, to those members from whom no reply has so far been received. If we get them all back this time, we will go ahead with the production of a new membership list and map.

Aircraft for Sale

(i) Rallye Minerva, 220 HP, full blind flying panel. VHF, VOR/LOC/1LS, Narco ADF 31A, Transponder, DME. 5 years old, 300 hours TT. £16,500. Tel. G.W. Lloyd, Evesham 860433

(ii) Rallye Commodore, 150HP. full panel, twin NAV/COM, ILS, ADF (digital) transponder. C. of A. to end 1979. 1000 hours to run on engine. Price negotiable.
Tel. T.W.E. Corbett, Leebotwood 231

(iii) Piper Aztec E, 1974, full airways'. 1400 hours T.T., immaculate.

Cessna 206 - Choice of 3, 1973, 1974, 1976 - 2 with new C. of A.

Cessna 150 - 1968, VHF VOR A.D.F. C. of A. to May 1981.

Robin HR 100/200 A - very well equipped and competitevely priced.

Full details of above from D. Corbett - Tel. 056881 351