FLYING FARMERS ASSOCIATION

WINTER RUMINATIONS

Those of us who farm in the southern half of the country have never experienced two such incredibly dry years.

This year started with one of the driest springs on record. My own small acreage of spring barley was all sown by the middle of January and I think this was the reason it yielded so well compared with the wheat which although was sown early in the year suffered from a bad Aphis attack in June. It was interesting to note that Huntsman was the variety which came off worst. A field of Aton was hardly affected and yielded two tons per acre. The Huntsman yielded 24 cwt. I am sure this low yield was due to Aphis only. All the wheat was sprayed by air but some Aphis came back for a second feast. Perhaps I should have sprayed twice or perhaps not at all! Although £4 per acre is not an unreasonable charge.

Aerial spraying had not really come to Surrey until this year. Our local Police Stations' switchboard was jammed for a few days, eventually however people quietened down. I believe it is up to the individual farmer to warn people about these activities. Phone calls to local riding schools, bee keepers, zoos, police stations and even a post card in the village shop explaining what we are doing, cannot be a bad thing. It was only ignorance that caused the total extermination of several hives of bees when some oil seed rape was sprayed on a farm near mine. You can imagine how I felt expecially as my air strip was being used as a base for the whole operation. Anyway its up to us to be responsible when using these toxic chemicals. It only takes a phone call and a bee keeper can shut up his bees inside the hives.

Apart from this no other disaster occurred. I was impressed by the long hours our contractor worked and by his attention to detail. The spraying was very accurate and even under overhanging trees I noticed that the Aphis were all killed. Spraying in sub urban Surrey does have its problems, one of them being the size of the fields - we cannot compete with the huge fields of neighbouring Hampshire, it must be cheaper to spray the latter.

Whenever we have a long stretch of dry settled weather I am tempted to take my old Aeroplane on a trip down to the Mediterranean but somehow this never materializes. I seem to get so involved in the farm that I very rarely have time to fly at all. However I have been asked by Tim Corbett to try and organise a trip abroad for next summer. I think it is a good idea so if anyone has any ideas where to go please contact me. There are lots of little airstrips on the Continent and many are right in the middle of interesting farming areas. How about a wine growing district in Western France?

Another good idea came from Bill Knapton. Most of us know Bill's gatherings at Finmere every month of the Vintage Aircraft Group. He has suggested that a farmer with a good strip should open up his farm for any one to call in, even if its just for a chat. We could have six volunteers to do this for the six summer months. Bill has offered Finmere as the first meeting place perhaps, next April. We want five more volunteers.

I was disappointed more members did not attend the British Airways Training Building at Heathrow. Those of us who made it found it extremely interesting. We were given a sumptuous lunch with some of the Senior Management and we were allowed to take a quick glance at their very involved training schedules.

A few days after this at the end of September we had another enjoyable day at the Horlicks Cattle Breeding Centre near Yeovil. Our thanks to Robin Dent for organising the Coach, the lunch and also giving many of us an interesting tour of the museum at Yeovilton. I was sorry the fog which did not lift until mid-morning kept many of us away. I would like to thank all of you who waited an hour for me.

It's nice to know that we have some very patient members amongst us.

Last month we went to the Weather Centre at Bracknell. I'm sure none of us realized what an involved and complicated business recording and forecasting weather is. We were told how many miles of paper ran thrcugh the computors every week. I can't remember the exact mileage but it was considerable. Congratulations to those members who flew to Blackbushe, the weather at the start of the day was not too good and I did not expect anyone to fly at all. Nineteen members and wives came by car however. Which brings me to the next point. We don't see nearly enough wives and girlfriends at our meetings.

Many will be interested to know the result of the proposed insurance scheme. I received fiftysix replies:

Twentyeight	favoured	A
Ten	"	B
Nine	"	C
Eight	"	D

One reply did not want any scheme.

Eighty odd people did not bother to reply at all. It only takes a 6½p stamp you know!

This scheme has been argued about by most of us for some time now. I've had several letters from members saying how essential they think it is. Other members have expressed their total opposition to it. We are going to have a Committee Meeting on this one point in London sometime in December. Once and for all I would like to get it finished and cleared up.

The year ahead I am sure will be another interesting one for us. Col. Williams-Wynne is organising another visit to British Airways Training Establishment. This time to their European Division near London Airport. As well as a trip abroad I would like to organize an A.G.M. preferably on someones strip in the middle of the U.K. Also don't forget we need five volunteers to open their strips and farms for us during the summer months.

I would like to thank all those who have helped the organisation over the past year, especially to our Chairman whose tireless efforts to keep things on the boil never stop.

Finally a very happy, healthy and prosperous New Year to all or you.

Anthony E. Poulsom.

THE FARM AIRFIELD

Now that we have about 140 members we are probably in a better position to advise those thinking of starting their own farm airfield than any other organisation. So, as some of you, like me, probably get asked what one has to do to start a private airfield on one's farm, I think that it might be wise to pool our knowledge.

I am not looking for any extra work, who is these days, but if you have any comments on the following notes please let me know, as briefly as possible, what your experience has been. I will then try to collate and edit the results.

Would you agree that there are several aspects of the procedure which ought to be taken into account, and that the sequence is probably:-

1. The field: Must be hard and well drained: about as level as possible: minimum of 400m in length: with approaches clear of trees, cables, buildings and the like. And if you cannot find such a field it is probably best not to go any further.

   If however, you are lucky enough to have two or more with all the above qualities then choose the one nearest to your house both to enable you to save time and also to keep an eye on it.

2. The C.A.A.: At this stage I always suggest a letter to the CAA, Space House, 43 Kingsway, London WC2 or, if there is an airport or aerodrome nearby make contact with them and discuss the idea. You do not have to have permission but they can offer very helpful advice at times.

3. Planning: If you are going to use it only yourself and you are a bona fide farmer who will use the aeroplane to keep an eye on the stock, on the ditches and drains, or to visit other farmers on business, etc. the best advice I can give is to carry on and not seek permission, saying, if challenged, that the aeroplane is a farm implement like a car or tractor for which no planning permission is necessary. But some farmers have got into quite unneccessary trouble by allowing a club to teach flying from their field, or worse still they have allowed gliding, and the noise which tugs make has already caused annoyance locally, or again parachuting which also makes a noise on take-off heavily loaded, and can lead to damage if someone misses the DZ! I have been asked by the CLA to write a note on starting setting up one's own airfield and I have refused because one cannot obviously publish the foregoing comments! What I have said is that I shall be glad to write to anyone who is thinking of making a farm airfield and I will, in a private letter, tell him all I know. But it must be in Confidence.

4. Insurance: We have already published a note on this in a Newsletter but I feel that it is worthwhile dealing with the matter again in this article. Do remember that if you give permission (you know the 'PPO' rule) you are, in law, inviting a pilot to land on your field. If he runs his nose-wheel into a rabbit scrape of which you were unaware then part of the cost of repairs can be laid at your door - and to strip an engine after the prop has struck the ground and the engine has had a shock loading can cost £2,000+. Suppose the visiting pilot's insurers say that 25% of the blame is the owner of the fields' then either he will be left with £500 to find, or he will take you to Court for the £500 and, unless you are covered by insurance for this risk, you will have to pay it.

The FFA is able to offer group insurance for airfield owners, and those of you who operate your own fields are asked to let me know whether you would be interested in joining the FFA Group? We have not yet concluded a deal with the Insurance Brokers concerned but I feel that I would be prepared to pay £10 a year to get cover of up to, say, £50,000 for any single occurrance.

5. Security: Aeroplanes confer so much mobility and flexibility that they are very tempting transport for smugglers, and unlicensed farm airfields obviously very attractive for illegal use. It is absolutely vital to keep a record of all landings, names, registration letters, points of departure, times and dates. A note in the farm desk diary is probably sufficient unless one lives near the coast, but one must be able to produce full records for the Customs and Excise and the police on demand.

6. Communications: Having established one's own airfield get in tcuch with any service or civil airfield within about twenty miles. They are invariably helpful and can often provide most valuable information and sometimes help to get one home. And it is worth remembering that there are a great many low-level routes and training areas in the U.K. The service pilots don't want to hit you (any more than you want to be hit) so they circulate information about airfields to other units.

7. Management: If the grass is kept short on a strip 10m wide the rest of the field can be used for hay or corn. A word of warning though, never apply mineral fertiliser or manure to the strip because the former is very aggressive and will eat into fabric or metal, while the latter is liable to be thrown up and to lodge in corners and crevices. The best sward is something like a trefoil or wild white clover which needs very little mowing.

Strips may be grazed by sheep with freedom, but it is as well to remember that cattle pose a very different problem and that dung flung up by the prop sticks like glue to an aeroplane and is very difficult to wash off. Ewes will move away when one makes a low pass before Landing, but take care not to have lambs with them because they are liable to try to join their dams and behave very erratically.

Never leave an aeroplane in a field with livestock; cattle will rub against it and lick the paint off: sheep will remove ADF and other aerials; ponies are liable to do anything.

Do these points cover all that one has to take into account?

If you have any suggestions please write to me:-

Col. John Williams-Wynne
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Tywyn
Merioneth LL36 9UD
North Wales.

INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL AVIATION CENTRE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 28 1976

IAAC NEWS RELEASE
IAAC RESCUE OPERATION

CRANFIELD BASE FOR NEW AG-AIR CENTRE

A rescue operation set in motion at a 1975 Congress on Agricultural Aviation, at the Royal Agricultural Show Ground, Stoneleigh, Warwickshire, now looks like succeeding.

The potential victim was the International Agricultural Aviation Centre, whose headquarters at The Hague, were closed when its Director General, Dr. W.J. Maan, retired.

The Centre, which began in 1958 as the "European" Centre under OEEC, and extended to international standing in 1960 to allow world participation, existed "to promote and improve the use of aircraft in agriculture, forestry, public health and resources management".

The IAAC had built up a library going back 30 years and a tremendous wealth of documentary know-how available to agricultural aviation interests the world over and covering every sort of food and fibre crop produced. It was felt essential that this should not pass into limbo.

At Stoneligh last year three national organizations agreed to form a "steering committee" to investigate the possibility of rescuing the centre and re-establishing it in the UK. These organizations were the Royal Agricultural Society of England (represented by Mr. CV Dadd - agricultural director of the Royal Show), the Royal Aeronautical Society, and the Cranfield Institute of Technology, Bedfordshire. Mr. RC Amsden, seconded from Fisons Ltd, Agrochemical Division, was appointed part-time secretary.

Last week-end the steering committee reported to a gathering of operators and other agricultural aviation interests from 9 world countries. Chaired by Mr. Dadd, the meeting was held at the Cranfield Institute which is prepared to provide accommodation for the new Centre. A temporary Council, composed of the 30 or so attending the meeting, was formed and an Executive committee including representatives from six countries was elected to deal with the legal and business side of the organization.

The Cranfield Institute will continue to act as treasurer and Air Vice-Marshall PC Cleaver, the Institute Secretary, put the annual financial requirement at £30,000. Much of this will come from the governments of participating countries, whose contribution is assessed at 7,500 Swiss Francs each. Further income is sought from various trusts, operating companies, the aircraft, chemical, fertilizer and associated industries and other interested parties.

Appointment of a director was deferred until assurance of the Centre's financial prospects is available, but meanwhile Mr. Dadd, as Vice-Chairman, and Mr. Amsden as secretary and editor of the Centre's quarterly journal, AGRICULTURAL AVIATION, will continue in office.

IAAC has, in its sixteen years' existence, achieved an enviable reputation as a clearing house for technical information, research reports and data on all matters concerning agricultural aviation the world over, and for the unique quality of the published proceedings of its international congress held at various world centres. Venue for the next Congress has not yet been fixed, but meanwhile the Proceedings of the Vth (1975) Congress are available at £10 per copy, and AGRICULTURAL AVIATION at US $ 5.50 per year (or current equivalent) from Mr RC Amsden, Hill House, Hadstock, Cambridge, CB1 6PB, England.

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Hon. Secretary R. C. Amsden
Hill House, Hadstock, Cambridge
CB1 6PE

Telephone Cambridge 891413
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CERTIFICATION AND MAINTENANCE OF AIRCRAFT NOT EXCEEDING 2730 KG MTWA

On application for issue or first renewal of a Certificate of Airworthiness after 1 January 1977, all aircraft, including helicopters, of 2730 kg and below will be classified in one or more of the following categories:

Transport Category, Passenger
Transport Category, Cargo
Aerial Work Category
Private Category
Special Category

Special Category will only be applicable to aircraft that cannot qualify for one of the other categories.

Aircraft categorised in more than one category will be required to meet the applicable standards of maintenance of the 'higher' category.

Some aircraft, including all home-builts, will only qualify for Permits to Fly but it is anticipated that such Permits will, through the efforts of the FAI be acceptable for international flights within Europe.

Aircraft in the Private, Public Transport or Aerial Work Categories will be granted Cs of A valid for 3 years.

Aircraft in the Special Category will be granted Cs of A valid for a maximum of one year.

Permits to Fly will normally be valid for one year.

The application forms for issue or first renewal of C of A after 1 January 1977 will include a declaration, to be signed by the registered owner, that the maintenance tasks will be accomplished as laid down in the appropriate schedule/s.

There will be a mandatory requirement to maintain a log book for all aircraft and maintenance, overhaul, repair, modification or replacement must be recorded and certified therein.

The renewal of the C of A by the CAA for all categories, except Special, will be subject to the receipt of the statutory fee, a maintenance report and recommendation from an appropriately UK licensed engineer on behalf of a company Approved by or Registered with the CAA for the purpose of making such reports. The existing format of Cs of A will be retained. The maintenance report form will be provided by the CAA.

Existing CAA approved organisations under BCAR A8-3 Overhaulers and BCAR A7-5 may apply to have their terms of approval extended to include the making of reports and recommendations for the renewal of the C of A. Organisations applying for approval or registration for the sole purpose of making reports and recommendations for the renewal of the C of A will require, as a minimum:- one engineer having valid CAA Licences A and C for the applicable aircraft/engine combinations, a suitable covered space (part of a hangar owned or rented on a semi-permanent contract basis), the applicable manufacturer's recommended tools and fixtures, the applicable manufacturer's maintenance publications, including Service Bulletins, Letters, etc.

All aircraft except those limited to Special Category or Permits to Fly will be required to be maintained to a schedule approved by the CAA.

The CAA will prepare suitable schedules incorporating the applicable manufacturer's recommendations for all aircraft in the Private Category.

Owners or operators of aircraft in the Public Transport or Aerial Work Categories may, as an alternative, submit their own maintenance schedule for CAA approval but it shall include all the applicable manufacturer's recommendations.

Maintenance Checks and Associated Certifications for Aircraft in the PUBLIC TRANSPORT or AERIAL WORK Categories:

These will be based on schedules prepared by the Authority or submitted by the operator and approved by the Authority incorporating a single check to be accomplished annually and certified by an appropriately licensed engineer in a company approved or registered for the purpose.

Additionally, manufacturer's or Authority recommendations which may be required at pericds other than annually shall be satisfied by appropriately licensed engineers or authorised inspectors in an appropriately CAA approved organisation.

Maintenance Checks and Associated Certifications for Aircraft in the PRIVATE Category:

These will be based on schedules prepared by the Authority, incorporating a single check to be accomplished annually and certified by an appropriately licensed engineer in a company approved or registered for the purpose.

Additional manufacturer's or Authority recommendations which may be required at periods other than annually may be satisfied by persons with sufficient experience and if so authorised by the owner or operator.

NOTE: Repairs, modifications or replacements shall, however, be certified by Certificates of Compliance by licensed engineers or approved inspectors so authorised in the ANO.

For all aircraft in the PUBLIC TRANSPORT, AERIAL WORK Or PRIVATE CATEGORIES:

For the purpose of preparing the maintenance report and recommendation to the CAA for renewal of the C of A, a Star Check shall be carried out at facilities approved or registered by the CAA for the purpose and the completed check shall be certified by UK licensed engineer/s holding a valid licence and rating for the type.

Star Check Definition:

An inspection of sufficient depth to enable the engineers certifying in each licence category that they are satisfied that, with subsequent maintenance properly performed in accordance with the applicable requirements, the part of the aircraft applicable to the licence category for which they are certifying should remain airworthy until the next "STAR" inspection is due to be performed.

The check shall be carried out immediately prior to the issue of a check certificate and shall include an inspection of the aircraft in accordance with the maintenance schedule with which the aircraft is required to be maintained. The engineer/s inspecting and certifying for completion of the "STAR" check in each licence category are to judge from experience and from the maintenance records of the aircraft, how far the aircraft should be disassembled and which components of the aircraft, if any, should receive further attention at the "STAR" inspection.

Special consideration must be given to aircraft which have a reputation for corrosion or other forms of deterioration, and aircraft which are kept or operated in an environment which may cause these deleterious effects.

Aircraft embodying wood and fabric may also warrant special consideration. Aircraft equipped with an Auto Pilot and/or Flight Director System must be inspected and certified by an engineer licensed in the appropriate category.

TDG
8.7.76