Newsletter - Flying Farmers Association.

Secretary's Notes.

Flying is about the furthest subject from my mind as I sit down to write this Newsletter at the end of January. My aeroplane is going through its C of A, my airstrip is under water, due to continual heavy rain and the pressures of an intensive livestock farm in winter have been keeping me busier than ever.

The turn of the year is always a time for reminiscing and most of us can look back on 1974 as a year we would rather forget. Farming has gone through one of the worst years since the early thirties (thank goodness I was not around then). The future looks very uncertain, and those of us who are expanding their businesses are not sure if they should be contracting or just standing still.

Flying has had a bad year too. The price of fuel has doubled along with every other fixed and variable cost and those of us who fly aircraft with few navigational aids have had their flying curtailed by disastrous weather.

The weather however did not stop our two outdoor meetings. The first one in April at the Farmers Weekly Drainage Demonstration at Solihull was well attended. This was our inaugural meeting and the Committee was encouraged by the good attendance.

The second meeting held at Shobdon by the kind invitation of David Corbett was very successful. Thirty-five aircraft and sixty-seven members turned up to hear an address by Douglas Bader, followed by a very interesting walk around David's farm which surrounds Shobdon airfield. My thanks to David and also to Edward Long of Farmers Weekly who has put so much enthusiasm into getting the Flying Farmers into operation. Only the Committee realise how much effort Edward has put into organising these meetings:- may his glider find many thermals!

Our first year ended with a talk by courtesy of the C.A.A. and the R.A.F. on Air Traffic Control and the Flying Farmer. Thirty-six members were present and all agreed that it had been a worthwhile meeting. I was a little disappointed with the low number of members but realise that sometimes it is difficult to get into London in the middle of winter, particularly for those of us who live many miles from the Capital.

This brings me to the present number of members in the F.F.A. which is at the time of writing one hundred and ten and I think this is excellent considering we have not been operational for a year. There are now more than 80 airstrips and my apologies for not circulating an up to date list of these strips but I hope all members will get a copy sometime early in the new year. David Corbett and I hope to be drawing up a map giving details of all strips and their coordinates, but members will just have to be patient because I know David has had staff problems and I have been busy trying to sort out the purchase of a new farm; so all in all the F.F.A. has had to take a back seat.

Our first meeting this year will be held on one of our Committee members farms. Many of us know Fred Spencer one of our founder members. As well as being a farmer, Fred is a qualified Flying Instructor and a C.P.L. His farm is 4 n.m. N.W. of Banbury. A windsock is displayed. Members are asked to take special care not to fly low over Banbury and to contact U.S.A.F. Upper Heyford prior to entering their M.A.T.Z. Fred is organising a talk by Dick Stratton who is in charge of aircraft maintenance at Oxford and his talk will be on what the individual farmer is allowed to do in the way of maintenance to his or her aircraft. Those of us who have heard Dick Stratton speak know that we shall have a lively and interesting discussion. If the weather is good we shall have an aeroplane outside which Mr. Stratton can use as the subject for his talk. If it rains we shall no doubt be able to use one of Fred's Barns.

The second meeting this year we hope to hold in conjunction with Twyfords Seeds. The time and place will be announced later in the Farmers Weekly.

An interesting Circular arrived here last month giving details of the fifth International Agricultural Aviation Congress to be held at the N.A.C. Kenilworth. Further details of this can be obtained from Frank Bishop (Conference Planners Ltd) 87, London Road, Croydon, CRO 2 RF. The Congress is going to be held on the 22nd - 25th September. No doubt Baginton will be fairly busy that week. I hope a contingent of F.F.A. members will be able to attend.

In the past several members have expressed their keeness to go to the Paris Agricultural Show (March 2 - 4) en force in their own aircraft or perhaps sharing with some other farmers. Anyone who wishes to fly to Paris could contact me and I may be able to put him in touch with someone else who wishes to do the same. Most light aircraft use Toussus-Le-Noble which is a few miles West of Central Paris but I understand it is easy to get a taxi or bus to take you to the show.

I can be contacted at Runfold 2044.

This brings me to the end of my first newsletter in 1975. My thanks to Colonel Williams Wynne for being an excellent and enthusiastic Chairman and to all the other Committee members who have helped the F.F.A. get started in 1974. Finally let us hope 1975 is a successfull year for farming as well asflying.

Anthony E. Poulson.

Foxbury Farm, Seale, Farnham, Surrey. Secretary.

Dates for your Diary.

1. 25th March at 1100 hrs on Fred Spencers' Farm, Banbury. "What the farmer can do legally to maintain his aeroplane". A talk and if weather permits a demonstration by Dick Stratton from C.S.E. Oxford. (Church Farm, Shotteswell, Banbury, Oxon) Fred Spencers Farm is marked by a Parachute on the latest I.C.A.O. map for Southern England and Wales (52° 5N. 01° 23W) on the 250 radial from Daventry VOR. It is approximately 3nms N.W. of the Birds Eye Custard Factory which is on the N. side of Banbury. The strip lies N.W./S.E. and has excellent approaches from either end. A Windsock is on display. All visiting aircraft should contact U.S.A.F. Upper Heyford on 124.4. All non-radio aircraft should keep well clear of Upper Heyford which is often very busy.
   Visitors are asked to bring prepacked lunches. The village hall will be opened and light refreshments may be available. Fred Spencer can be contacted at Wroxton St. Mary 275.
2. A demonstration by kind invitation of Twyfords Seeds in June/July. Details to be announced in Farmers Weekly later in the Summer.
3. The fifth International Agricultural Aviation Congress 22nd - 25th September at N.A.C. Stoneleigh. Details in the Secretarys' Notes.

The following appears by courtesy of the Editor of Air Way and is a reminder to some who may have been in the same situation as the pilot in this story.....

MK1 EYEBALL TRIUMPHS AGAIN.

In this technological age, it is reassuring to hear of an occasional situation where the human element proves its superiority over electronic gadgetry. Such an incident occurred recently when a light civil aircraft was lost on a flight from Bristol to Guernsey.

The story started when the London Civil FIR Controller was alerted by a call from a pilot stating that he was lost after crossing the coast, last known position Exeter, but he had now turned on to a northerly heading to fly back over land. The FIR Controller advised the LATCC (Mil) Distress and Diversion Controller of the situation; unfortunately no DF bearings could be obtained, nor could the ground radars see the aircraft. A USAF C 130 aircraft offered to lend assistance by using his airborne radar, and shortly afterwards reported a faint radar plot in position 10 nm south east of Chivenor. As this position coincided with the LATCC radar site at Burrington, the distress

and Diversion Controller telephoned the technical staff there and asked them to look outside to see if there was a light aircraft in the vicinity. The technical staff advised the Distress and Diversion Cell tht they could in fact see a light aircraft; and so, to check this "identification", the Distress and Diversion Controller asked the civil pilot if he could see the radar scanners below. His reassuring reply was accepted as confirmation of the fix and a very relieved pilot was given a heading for Cardiff (Rhoose) where he subsequently landed safely.

These notes are written by R.H. Martin of Willis Faber and Dumas Ltd, 54, Leadenhall Street, London. It is emphasised that they are written by and are the opinion of an Insurance Agent and are meant as a guide only.

Notes for Guidance on insuring aircraft and airstrips.

The question of insuring Aircraft and other related liabilities, is one which has doubtless been considered by most owners and is a complex subject.

Briefly, so far as the Aircraft is concerned, an owner should Insure the Aircraft against Accidental Loss or Damage for its current market value including accessories and /or equipment. Care must be taken in assessing the value as there is no benefit derived from either over-valuation or under-valuation for Insurance purposes.

In addition to the foregoing, Insurance should be effected to cover the Liabilities arising out of the operation of the Aircraft to protect the owner/operator against claims made by Third Parties and Passengers. Recent Court Awards for damages to other persons property and more important, Bodily Injury to persons, has increased enormously. It is extremely difficult to stipulate the amount of Liability coverage for which each operator should insure because, obviously, it is not normally as economically visible for them to insure for the same Limits as most Commercial Operators. We would, however, suggest for Third Party Liability, a Limit of not less than £250,000 any one accident and, for Passenger Liability, a Limit of not less than £30,000 any one person.

When insuring against these Risks, the owner should ensure that all relevant information, particularly Pilots and Uses, are given to insurers as this is most important and will affect the premium.

The above comments are based on an owner being termed as a "Private Operator". There are, in fact, no Legal requirements in the U.K. for an Aircraft Operator to insure, although in the case where Aircraft are being operated to carry passengers on a cost sharing or hire and Reward Basis, such flights fall within the Carriage by Air (Application of Provisions) Order 1967. Under the Conditions of this order it is essential for an operator to indemnify passengers on terms which are far more onerous than Common Law Liability so it is clearly wise to insure against these risks.

Where operators use their own Private Airstrips or any other Private Airstrips for that matter, they should also ensure that there are no exclusions on the Policy relating to unlicensed landing grounds.

If any Private Airstrips are used by other visiting aircraft, then no matter how free or friendly the arrangements, there is, without doubt, a liability on the part of the Airfield Operator, as any such arrangements are apt to be overlooked after an accident when the question of compensation arises. Airstrip Owner/Operators can insure against their liabilities in the form of a General Airpor t Operators and Owner Liability Policy, which basically covers liability for loss or damage caused through inadequate maintenance of the Airfield surface, loss or damage to Aircraft being Hangared and loss or damage through faulty repair, maintenance and refuelling services. It is however, doubtful that in the case of Private Airstrips, the latter two facilities will be offered except perhaps in circumstances where fuel is supplied.

There are varying Limits of Indemnity available for this class