FLYING FARMERS ASSOCIATION LTD

NEWSLETTER NO. 2

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SECRETARY'S NOTES

There are now over 90 members of the Association with members in nearly every county of England and with several in both Wales and Scotland.

We expect membership to reach 100 this year which, for our first full operating season, is quite something. Originally it was thought that membership might possibly reach 150 in five years - we could reach that in three.

Before long, the FFA hopes to circulate a further list of members bringing up to date the list of airstrips.

Our last meeting at Shobdon was a huge success - but more of that later.

Our next meeting has been arranged. It is to be held at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, December 3rd at the Central Electricity Generating Board's lecture room, Sudbury House, Newgate Street, London.

This is quite close to St. Paul's underground station.

We chose December 3rd because it is the second and most popular day of the Smithfield Fatstock Show at Earls Court.

David,

Excellent idea re B.L.A.C operators Committe /cont...
I suggest you pay and I will reimburse you. Can you make the 3rd?
Dec (I know it's a long way) hope you can. I can't find a Jones on
our list are you sure his applied? Get him to send me his name and

We are trying to arrange for someone to come to talk to us about the workings of Britain's Air Traffic Control system.

To back up his talk we hope to show two films. The first is called Air Traffic Under Control, which lasts 20 minutes, and the second is called Air Traffic Control And The Private Pilot, which lasts 18 minutes.

Douglas Bader told us at Shobdon that these were excellent films and just the sort of thing we would both enjoy and benefit from seeing.

Please make every effort to come along as it sounds like being a worth-while meeting.

It has been suggested that next spring we have a fly-in where someone could give a talk on what the farmer can do legally to maintain his own aircraft. It is hoped an aircraft can be used as a demonstration.

Your comments on this please.

Another idea is to ask anyone who has had experience of unwanted aliens coming into his strip to tell us of the implications and what should be done.

This leads me to the next point. One of our founder members, Harry Bott from Stevenage, has sent me the following letter from H.M. Customs and Excise addressed to him. He asked if publicity could be given to this. Whether members comply with their request or not is up to individual members.

"Dear Sir,

UNLICENSED AIRSTRIP

I have been requested by the Commissioners of Customs and Excise to seek your co-operation in the event of your becoming aware of an arrival from, or impending departure to, a foreign place at your airstrip at Benington.

If the flight has not previously been authorised by this Department, you are requested to contact one of the officers below:-

1. R.D.A. Stuart - Office:- 2 Station Road
Letchworth
Tel:- Letchworth 5515/6

Home:- 21 Broadwater Dale
Letchworth
Tel:- Letchworth 73187

2. K.B. McGilvray - Office:- 2 Station Road
Letchworth
Tel:- Letchworth 5515/6

Home:- 61 Baldock Road
Letchworth
Tel:- Letchworth 6107

/cont...

"I would be grateful also if you could, through your connection with the Farmers' Flying Association, urge all members who operate aircraft from unlicensed strips to advise their local Office of Customs and Excise immediately.

Yours faithfully,

R.D.A. Stuart
Officer of Customs and Excise."

I would welcome any contributions for the newsletter. With evenings drawing in it must be better to write something than to sit looking at a "box" all night.

As from the end of November my address will be:

White Lane Farm,
White Lane,
~~Ash Green~~, Tongham
Surrey.

'Phone: Guildford 810251.

Anthony Poulsom

P.S. It's got a decent airstrip, too!

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SHOBDON 1974

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

It was quite obvious from the way that people contrived to fly to Baginton for our first meeting earlier this year that weather was not going to stop farmers flying!

Shobdon, held on a day when there were severe gales blowing everywhere, underlined the fact.

True, some Members were late arriving. But what of that? The tanker calls late, a tractor won't start and some heifers have got on the main road, and Bill's wife rings to say he has 'flu. You know it all. Add to that Volmet, which has selected as Top of the Chart a refrain which has as a chorus "...040 and 35 knots.....220 and 30 knots" and ends up with "No sig"! All in all, we did well to start the meeting only thirty minutes late.

A very worthwhile meeting it was, too, with some excellent and constructive suggestions we can follow up. It was just what one would expect from farmers who had flown themselves - 55 of them in 33 aeroplanes - from as far off as Aberdeen, Ayrshire, Edinburgh, Exeter, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Kent, Surrey, Oxfordshire, Merioneth and many other places in between. About the only Member who did not arrive by air was our host, David Corbett, whose company owns and farms all the land around the airfield and who had taken immense trouble to make it a worthwhile day.

As I sat in the clubroom of the Herefordshire Aero club, facing the slowly expanding audience and wondering whether to start the meeting, I kept looking out of the window - and each time I did so there was another one on Finals. Once I thought I was seeing double because there were two, in tight formation. But Shobdon has a very wide runway and I presumed they knew what they were doing - they did!

Of course, one of the attractions was the presence of Douglas Bader, who had flown from White Waltham in his Travelair and who addressed us on "The CAA and the Flying Farmers Association". What he said was very much to the point and I have a feeling that he has helped us to establish our Association as a responsible organisation in the eyes of the CAA. For my part, I cannot think of anything more important.

I am sure it was a good idea bringing our haversack rations with us. Catering would have been very difficult and, consequently, very expensive, and we are not a social club but a collection of professional farmers meeting to discuss professional matters. And this we did. After a half hour break we climbed onto trailers provided by David Corbett (complete with straw bales) and set off round his farm, the highlight of which was a visit to his Spindle Bush (I'd never heard the term before, but then we are not in apple country) Golden Delicious Orchards. He had with him from the Netherlands his friend and consultant, Mr. Bott who, in faultless English, explained the technique of growing apples in this way, while all around Flying Farmers munched Golden Delicious apples in the brief burst of sunshine which favoured us in the afternoon.

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We had timed the visit exactly right. A week later and the bushes would have been picked bare.

It will be difficult to arrange a more successful Farm Walk or one which is more appreciated. I can say this with confidence because, while others ate apples, I went round talking to Members and listening to what they had to say. I found it really remarkable that whereas when one collects a lot of amateur aviators the talk usually is all about flying and aeroplanes, at Shobdon it was all about farming. They might all have come by motor coach and car. I think this is a most encouraging aspect of the Fly-in.

We left, as we came, in an orderly, easy, uncongested string. We were cleared, one after the other, by a most efficient ATC in the Tower. We flew off to all points of the compass with plenty to think about, even if we cannot all have apples on bushes which never grow more than six feet high.

John Williams-Wynne

NOTICE

This is really only in the nature of a suggestion, but I believe that if we adopt it the Committee will be able to give you better value for your Membership.

Farming today is so specialised that by no means all our Members are going to be interested in the same systems. The large-scale arable farmer, for example, is not greatly concerned with the management of a mountain flock; the dairy farmer may not be very interested in market gardening. Of course, I realise that anyone may take a day off to see how the other half lives, but on the whole we are tending towards specialisation. If, then, you feel that your interests are limited would you let the Hon.Sec. know so that when we plan a Farm Walk we can have a rough idea of the number of members who are likely to come.

Something simple is all that is required:-

Name .. ..

Address .. ..

Main activity .. ..(say, arable)

Subsidiary .. .. (say, poultry)

Farmer on the Flight Deck

"How about coming on a training flight next week?" The question came from an old friend who was a training captain on 707s for British Airways.

It was right in the middle of harvest and I knew I should not leave the farm at such a critical time of the year. So many things seem to go wrong when the boss is away even for an hour or two. However the temptation was too much and I told my friend that somehow I was going to make it. An opportunity such as this just could not be missed.

On the appointed day we arrived at Heathrow at 09.30 and after a security check I was ushered through to the Briefing Room. Two first officers and an engineer were having their six months check-out and while we waited for our aircraft to be refuelled all three were briefed as to what they would be expected to do.

The flight plan was filed at the Company Office. The flight would be a Stand Instrument Departure from 28 Right on to Clacton Three to Bedford via Chiltern and Brookmans Park. Once at Bedford we would spend about two and a half hours doing circuits. The flight would last about three hours and a staggering 28 tons of fuel was to be allocated to the flight.

Having passed through still more security checks we were driven out to the aircraft which only an hour or so before had arrived from Hong Kong. The cleaners had not had time to clean the cabin and everything was absolutely filthy. I heard later that it was company policy for their machines to be used to their full capacity (haven't I heard that before somewhere!) and all training flights had to be squeezed in between scheduled route flying.

I was seated in the 'jump seat' behind the captain and I was given a headset and shown the position of the transmit/receive switch so that I could ask any questions. At first the flight deck looked so complicated I thought I would never understand anything at all but gradually things fell into place and I soon had a rough idea of what was going on.

After start up we were pushed out from the ramp by tractor and we taxied along what seemed miles of taxiway to wait our turn for take off. During this time the first officer steered the aircraft by hand by means of a tiny wheel by his right knee, at the same time he called out the checklist which was confirmed by the captain and flight engineer.

The take off was impressive. As we sped down the runway the first officer called 'air speed building'. At 100 knots the rudder becomes effective and his right hand, which was holding the nose wheel steering went to the stick. 'V1' (the decision speed) was followed by 'Rotate' when the stick was smartly rotated at about 150 knots. 'V2' was the speed at 30 feet, about 160 knots.

During the Airways Flight a runaway stabilizer (trimmer) was simulated and the engineer had to lower the undercarriage by means of a large handle.

We joined 'downwind' at Bedford and the two officers under check flew a number of roller circuits and to add variety to the exercise the Training Captain would often cut out outboard engines, inducing yaw towards the dead engine (corrected by a lot of opposite rudder). Then were wheel well fires, H.D.I. (artificial horizon) failures and many other simulated catastrophes, all corrected by the appropriate drills.

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The engines were burning seven tons of fuel per hour and it was very noticeable that as the aircraft became lighter so the take off run became that much shorter until at the end of the session it became almost a S.T.O.L. aircraft.

After three hours we returned to Heathrow. Far below I watched Gliders from Booher circle lazily against the Buckinghamshire stubbles and a few minutes later I was listening to the 'bleeping' of the outer marker onto 28 R.

It had been a worthwhile experience and I was very impressed by the efficiency of the system for checking these pilots. If their flying had to be criticised, which it was on several occasions, it was done so immediately and often not politely! I drove home from Heathrow assured that all who fly in these complicated pieces of machinery are in the care of very skilled and capable pilots.

AP