FLYING FARMERS ASSOCIATION LTD

NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 1983

INTRODUCTION

We must apologise if this newsletter seems shorter of Flying Farmers Association news than usual at this time of year. Not only has your Hon. Secretary/Newsletter writer got yet another responsibility, but also one of his key men at home has been hospitalised for a major operation for the past month, with several weeks absence yet to come. So please forgive the shortage of F.F.A. news - but this, you will agree, is more than made up for by Bill Pinckley's excellent article in this issue.

A. G. M.

The A.G.M. will take place as usual in London during Smithfield week, on Monday afternoon 5th December - please see formal notice of A.G.M. printed later in this newsletter. The speaker will be an Engineer from the Accidents Investigation Branch of the Department of Trade and Industry, and we expect that our Chairman will also be showing his video tapes of our visits this year to RAF Binbrook and the Scilly Islands.

SPRING VISIT, APRIL 1984

We are pleased to give you advanced warning of a two day visit organised by our Chairman, Dick Walgate, for 26 and 27 April, 1984. One day will be spent with Marshall tractors (who, most members will remember, bought out the British Leyland tractor interests, and are now building an improved range of wheeled tractors under the Marshall name), and the second day will be spent as guests of the Red Arrows at their base at RAF Scampton.

We hope to arrange a dinner for those members who stay locally overnight to attend both days.

Last year, we had a record attendance of 44 aircraft and 109 members and guests at the spring visit to RAF Binbrook - can we beat this record in 1984?

Please keep these date free in your diary.

FARMERS WEEKLY ARTICLE, OCTOBER 1983

Many members may not be aware that our Association was formed in 1974, entirely due to the enthusiasum of our then Chairman, Col John Williams Wynne (now our President, and to whom we send greetings by this newsletter) and the guidance and practical support of the then Editor of Farmers Weekly, (Travers Legge), and Edward Long, one of the Farmers Weekly reporters.

Travers Legge has now retired (to be replaced by Denis Chamberlain, now Editor), and Edward Long is now a freelance journalist specialising in agricultural affairs. As a result of a meeting at the 1983 Royal Show between Edward, our Chairman and your Hon. Secretary, a two page feature article, with coloured photographs, appeared in the centre spread of Farmers Wekly on 25th October. This article described Dick Walgate's farming activities, and his use of his Cessna 206 aircraft in relation to his various farming activities. (Note the aircraft registrations!)

The article was accompanied by a side panel giving details of your Association. We are most grateful to the Editor of Farmers Weekly, and to Edward Long, for the excellent coverage given. See next item for the direct results!

MEMBERSHIP LIST AND AIRSTRIP MAP

Although the draft of the new Membership list is now complete, together with an airstrip list, we decided not to go ahead with printing, because we were aware of Edward Long's impending article.

This decision was well justified, because, in the few days since the article over 25 requests for membership forms, with letters coming in every day. We therefore intend to wait until we have signed up the majority of these potential new members, before printing the new lists. Incidentally, a copy of this newsletter will go to each enquiry received as a result of the Farmers Weekly article.

1984 PROGRAMME

In addition to the 2 day spring visit already referred to, we need to build up a programme of more visits. Any suggestions from members, or from potential new members, will be welcomed by the Hon. Secretary at his usual address.

A MEMBER'S TRIP TO SOUTH AFRICA

We are most grateful to Bill Pinckney for writing the following article which describes his trip out to South Africa earlier this year.

HOLLY FARM - CAPE TOWN

It was shortly after Christmas that I decided to make the flight to South Africa in the Rallye Tobago which I have owned for three years. The reason I used for going, was to visit my daughter who was working there on a farm, but really I suspect it was the articles in the Pilot Magazine telling of the magnificent weather and all the other joys of the different world of Africa. My wife supported and helped me extricate myself from the daily farm administration, mainly I suspect in the understanding that she did not have to come with me.

On making enquiries to people who had done the trip before, I soon found that I had not left very long in which to get clearance from each country I passed through. On first sight there is no problem, as all that is necessary is to telex from a C.A.A. Office, in my case Birmingham, giving particulars of the aeroplane and the reason for going, etc, and they will reply within seven days. The reality is somewhat different, as in most cases they do not bother to reply. After ten days I sent another lot of telex and the nett result was that only one country, Tanzania, answered my requests.

I found all the maps I wanted from Air Tour at Elstree with the exception of one, which they sent me within two days. Also, British Airways sent me all the Aerad charts and the Africa Supplement from their Navigation Department with the minimum of delay.

I took off from my farm strip on a very cold morning on 29th January, and flew to Hurn to do customs. As usual they were very helpful, but drew the line at giving me the fuel drawback on the invoice for fuel from my local garage. From Hurn I flew to Biarritz to do French customs, then on to Tarbes just forty minutes away to the east to get a 100 hour check and a ferry tank fitted which then gave me a range of over 1000 miles.

Two days later, and having been very well looked after at the Socata factory at Tarbes I set off early, flight planning for Corfu, or Brindisi in Southern Italy if there were any delays through the weather.

To Corfu took 8½ hours, although it did not seem that long at the time. The French authorities do not permit a direct crossing of the Mediterranean in spite of a dinghy, life jacket, and a floating beacon, so one has to route around the coast via Marseille before

turning south for Corsica.

From Corfu the next landing was to be Cairo which really made me feel I would be getting somewhere although I was to be surprised to find out just how different Cairo is from home. From Corfu it was a case of wending a way through the Greek Islands, then over-flying the tip of Crete and on to the coast of Egypt. Although I knew that Egypt was largely desert I was not prepared for the breath-taking sight of leaving the Mediterranean and flying into Egypt without seeing a single living thing or sign of man except a single roof for about 100 miles. Just sand. On approaching Cairo, I thought the controller asked me if I had permission, but as I was beginning to say I had my clearance requests with me I realised that he was asking for my position - which was quite a relief. To my amusement he also said "confirm you are one aircraft", and not in formation.

Cairo is sprawled into the desert on both sides of the Nile, and has to be seen to be believed. The Pyramids make wonderful landmarks and contrast with the squared effect of all the buildings and the bright green of the fertile Nile irrigation systems. The next day I saw the Pyramids and the Sphinx and some of the other sights of Cairo. Some of these would not be in the Egyptian Tourist Guide, but it all adds to the feeling of being abroad and if nothing else, makes you appreciate England.

Cairo charged a handling fee which is obligatory, but it was the only time I had to pay one throughout the trip, it being about £32. The boarding fee, however was only about £10 which I thought was very reasonable amongst all the international Jumbos.

From Cairo I flew down the Nile to Luxor, or rather across the desert, but keeping the Nile to the right. At Luxor they asked me whether I required an armed guard on the aeroplane, and I felt it was the sort of question you had to answer in the affirmative. They also had me fill in forms - some of which did not seem appropriate, as they requested to know 'Numbers of Deserters' and 'Number Transferred to Hospital'. Luxor is a beautiful place on the Nile with several ancient temples, masses of goats and the fascinating river traffic of the Nile to watch. The four decked hotel boats stop here on their way to Aswan mixed with the commercial traffic and the ferries and small sailing dhows of the locals. The transport in Luxor is mainly by horse and carriage, and I took one to see a"Son et Lumiere" at the Karnak temple that evening.

I made an early start next morning for Khartoum. At the Control Tower I had to wade through the locals, praying to Mecca, and went to the top to find the controller asleep on the floor. When I went in he woke up, dressed, and put his pyjamas into an executive brief case.

Khartoum was interesting and it was a change to find a different attitude from Egypt where people had wanted money for anything they did - even stamping the passport or fuelling the aeroplane. The Sudanese seem to be dignified and in my experience very helpful. I had been warned in England that fuel could be a problem in Kartoum, but in fact two companies offered to serve me with fuel within minutes of landing.

The next day I hoped to make an early start for Nairobi. I noticed that in North Africa people do not seem to wear shorts, and I felt it looked very South African so I thought it wiser to wear long trousers and never to mention S.A. However, with the long flight to Nairobi I put on my shorts having walked the ½ mile to the aircraft. On requesting taxi clearance they called me back to the Tower, so I put on my longs and walked back as I had forgotten to hand in my General Declaration. Back to the aeroplane on with the shorts, call for take-off clearance, and again Negative - problem with the clearance. On with the longs, leg it back to the Tower and sort out this one. A very helpful chap sorted out the problem, so back to the aeroplane. Again the quick change, and yet again to go back once more to the Tower as my helper was having his breakfast and had forgotten to tell the Tower it was OK.

I got away very late at about 11 o'clock for Nairobi, and at about 3 hours form Nairobi I felt unhappy about continuing in the dark over 9000' high ground, so I landed at a little strip near a beacon at Lodwar, alongside Lake Rudolf. I went to the police

station so that they could call Nairobi on their radio and tell them I would be arriving tomorrow. As usual in black Africa there was a little problem getting through, so we had the idea to radio from the plane to an overflying airliner. This was very easy and they passed the message to Nairobi immediately. In Africa there is a universal frequency 126.9 for this facility, so if it is necessary to make a position report and the range is a problem airliners are happy and expect to provide this service.

At Lodwar I stayed in their local hotel, or shack as we would call it, with corrugated iron roof with on lining, at £2 per night.

The following day I continued to Nairobi and landed at their G.A.field called Wilson Airport. Unfortunately, I had overflown a military field which is adjacent to Wilson, and they wanted a statement and full particulars of my flight. Although this happens quite frequently they are very sensitive to overflying, as there was an attempted coup at Nairobi last year.

Kenya was beautifully green after the desert and scrub of North Africa. Again people were friendly and helpful, though there was a hint of resentment when I tipped a hotel porter for carrying my bags and had obviously not given him enough as he turned on his heels without saying anything.

From Nairobi I planned to fly to Blantyre in Malawi, and started early next morning having followed the controller's directions for leaving the airfield (without flying over the military field). In fact on the return journey my friend who flew the aeroplane back, did again overfly the military field and was called back to land which he had to do

The journey to Blantyre was as usual in beautiful weather, and it was interesting to measure on the map that I could see Kilimanjaro from over one hundred miles away. To get to Blantyre I flew down the length of Lake Malawi, which is over 300 miles, and makes a very easy feature to follow. I realised before flying to Malawi that I did not have a clearance, so I sent a telegram from Nairobi to inform them of my arrival time. However, on passing an airfield alongside the Lake, they informed me that as I did not have a clearance I would have to return to Nairobi. At this, they did not give me permission, but instead went silent on me when I told them I would report my position to airfield furtner down the Lake. When I called Blantyre, there was a problem with communication and they again said that as I did not have a clearance they would have to tell me to return, but an airliner who was relaying messages to the controller said to him "what do you expect him to do?"

They finally gave clearance to proceed and on landing I was met by two policemen, who were civility itself. After I had answered their questions they took me into town - in the police Land Rover, even insisting on carrying my bags to the hotel. On instructions from above they kept my passport and the interview I had the next day with the police chief (who kept me waiting for three hours), was not in the same pleasant atmosphere. This caused me to spend an extra day in Malawi. The country, however, seems to be very stable and prosperous with no race problems at all.

From Malawi to Harare in Zimbabwe it is necessary to overfly the country of Beira, which was formerly Mozambique. Again they had not answered my telex, and they do not answer local requests at short notice. If an aircraft overflies at 20000 ft, no clearance is required, so I was privately advised to file a flight plan at 20000 ft and fly as high as possible as there have been incidents in recent years with trigger-happy bush units, letting fly at passing aircraft. I felt a bit guilty when the controller asked me to confirm the flight level (200), but I am sure it must be happening all the time. As luck will have it, at 10000 ft I was above cloud, and it was the work of a moment to tell the Zimbabwe controller when approaching Harare, that I had enforced flight plan and was at 10000 ft.

Landing at Harare was particularly pleasant, with large stork-like birds seen on both sides of the runway. The British Aircraft Corporation were demonstrating their successor to the BAC 111, the 146 on the Zimbabwe leg of an African Tour, and they showed me round the mighty machine.

From Harare I flew the aeroplane to the Que Que, where I stayed with a farmer

friend who was to fly the plane back to England. The enterprise on the farm is fresh vegetables sold to the local hospital, army and other outlets. The price of land is such that in Zimbabwe it is not unusual to be able to pay for the farm in a couple of seasons return, the problem being that there is no chance of taking that money out of the country if one wanted to leave.

After a few days, I flew to Cape Town to collect my daughter, and then flew to Victoria Falls, staying at the Victoria Falls Hotel which I think is my favourite hotel anywhere in the world that I have been. Zimbabwe has many outstanding hotels which are being under-utilised due to the bad publicity caused by isolated terrrorist activity. We also flew to the Wanki Game Park seeing a herd of hundreds of elephants, and hearing the awe inspiring sound of lions in the night.

Flying in South Africa was very straight-forward with all the radio aids working unlike the north and central Africa. One point which I think would do well to be copied in England, is that every airfield has its name written in letters at the field big enough to be read from overflying aircraft. This would not be expensive, and I can think of many times in the U.K. when I would have been glad of the confirmation of my position or otherwise.

As far as flight planning is concerned, flying in Africa is perhaps more simple than expected. The distances are greater than in Europe and the weather is usually excellent, so this makes the work load lighter. Each evening I would spend some time in my hotel room putting a line on the map and looking up the frequencies before getting local advice at the Tower the next morning. Landing fees in South Africa and Zimbabwe are very cheap with even the largest airports, usually being less than £5 sterling.

After 26 days away, I flew back from Johannesburg by British Airways, leaving the plane to be brought home by my farmer friend - and his wife who expects her first baby in July.

Bill Pinckney.

ASSOCIATION TIES

A Flying Farmer Association tie has now been designed and ordered. The design is a pair of wings, with a circle in the centre in which there is a corn sheaf. Under the circle are the letters F.F.A. The design is yellow on a blue background, and ties will be available early in the New Year. The price to members will be £3.50. postage forwarded, with your cheque, to the Hon. Secretary.

AIRCRAFT FOR SALE

Rallye Minerve MS894A - 1973 Afr Hrs 373, Eng Hrs 373, Prop Hrs 373, Private C of A to January 1985, 1 x NARCO 12B VHF/VOR/LOC/GS, 1 x NARCO 31AB ADF, 1 x NARCO UD 14 DME, 1 x NARCO A150A TRANSPONDER. Factory corrosion proofed. Full Panel, Navigation Lights, Heated Pitot. Blue/White. Interior Blue.

£11,000 Plus VAT. Telephone Evesham (0386) 860433. G. W. Lloyd

YACHT FOR SALE

SADLER 32 yacht, 1980. Watermota 32 HP diesel, 6 berths. Lying South France, French T.V.A. paid. Subsidise your yachting in the sun with charter income. For further details, apply Hon. Secretary (D. Corbett) 056 881 351

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Nineth Annual General Meeting of the Flying Farmers Association Limited will be held at 1500 hours, Monday 5th December, 1983, in the Cromwell Suite, Kensington Court Hotel, 33 Nevern Place, LONDON SW5.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence.

2. Minutes of the 8th Annual General Meeting.

3. Chairman's Report.

4. Treasurer's Report, Accounts and Balance Sheet for the year ended 31st March, 1983.

5. To reappoint Messrs Keens, Shay Keens & Co. as auditors for 1983/84, in accordance with Section 14 of the Companies Act 1976

6. Election of Committee and Officers for 1983/84.

7. Election of Members of the Company.

8. Programme for 1984.

9. Any Other Business.

Followed by a guest speaker.