FLYING FARMERS ASSOCIATION

August 2021 newsletter no. 137



CHAIRMAN'S RAMBLINGS

This ramble doesn't make good reading and I wish I didn't have to take the responsible / cautious, even paranoid approach to the whole essence of what the FFA is all about – visiting other members' strips.

We were all shocked to hear about the problems our member David Walsey is having at Oxenhope. If you didn't see the FFA email with David's description of the incident, this is a summary – a Jodel D117 took off in a group from his airfield in 2014. The pilot knew full well that the runway 24 was wet at one end as he had operated from Oxenhope for 14 years. He had even put cones out to mark a wet area on the threshold of 24. On his return, unlike others in the group who landed on 29, he landed short on 24, within the coned area! The aircraft turned over injuring both the pilot and passenger. Everyone, including the Air Investigators and his passenger said it was pilot error – but the pilot's insurers informed David in 2015 that they would be claiming against him. In November this year 2021, the pilot's insurers are taking David to High Court in London at a cost to David in the region of £100,000 of irrecoverable costs to fight the case with the possibility of a huge sum if he loses the case.

David wasn't insured. The pilot had reduced his insurance on his aircraft to reduce costs. David had worked on the principle of 'Fly at your own Risk' basis for 40 years. If he loses, he will have to sell the airfield and there could be consequences for other unlicenced strips. We wish him the best in this crazy litigious assault on David and his airfield.

For over 20 years, the FFA have offered a strip liability insurance scheme with Hayward Aviation. About 60 members currently have this policy (David included now) which is based on level of cover required. Not all airstrip owners want to take out this cover as they probably only use the strip themselves or limit the number of visitors to those they know and trust.

I, myself have a letter from the NFU Mutual confirming that "if an aircraft owned by a third party landed on my airstrip and was damaged as a result of the condition of the airstrip, (the example used was if it hit a rabbit hole), if I was deemed legally liable, cover would apply" This is part of the farm public liability policy which has an indemnity limit of £10 million any one accident.

This doesn't cost me any extra, as it is part of the overall farm policy. I liken it to if a visitor drove off our farm road for some reason and injured themselves, then the public liability policy would apply. What is the difference with the airstrip? Of course, I must make sure that the airstrip is safe to use and show a duty of care, which would apply with any liability insurance.

If you are with the NFU or any other insurer, it might be worth checking to see if you have cover already. Beware – I haven't put it to the test!

On the back of all this, we are reviewing the FFA officers liability insurance which covers those organising the events and meetings for the FFA. This policy was taken out 20 years ago in conjunction with the airstrip insurance policy with Haywards, to protect ourselves if we are held liable if something went wrong while carrying on FFA business. It appears that over the years this policy has become diluted and the interpretation has changed - probably because Haywards have change hands many times and we aren't dealing with the same staff that set it up. They also prefer to devote their time to clients like Luton and Gatwick!

A new scheme is being formed with a new insurer who can offer the FFA cover to protect any member or officer carrying out FFA business – for example organising an event – and will include liability cover for any strip we use whilst holding a meeting. We are now looking to extend this to offering airstrip and aircraft cover through this insurer, who is a very approachable gentleman, a pilot himself with his own Cessna 120, and who will hopefully come up with good deals for our members.

Paul Stephens

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Joined Since 1st March 2021

8705	S. Beckett, Birmingham, Worcestershire
8707	C. Chambers, Northampton, Northamptonshire
8708	T. Christian, Trimdon Station, Durham
8710	C. C. Coventry, Dereham, Norfolk
8709	G. F. H Crabb, Bridport, Dorset
8714	D. Curtis, Boston, Lincolnshire
8711	M. G. Goff, Dereham, Norfolk
8689	J. Huggins, Dover, Kent
8699	D. Humphries, Tonbridge, Kent
8702	R. Mcguffie, Herefordshire
8688	C. O'Mahoney, Crossgates, Powys

Departing Members

588	W. E. Barton	Resigned
206	T. W. R. Case	Subscription cancelled
8654	M. Goodacre	Resigned
485	G. E. Heritage	Resigned
805	I. Manley	Subscription cancelled
428	R. A. Marven	Deceased
585	D. Sansome	Deceased
191	R. Stobo	Resigned
8608	W. Stonham	Subscription cancelled
245	A. Taylor	Subscription cancelled
730	S. A. Tuer	Subscription cancelled
226	F. M. Usher-Smith	Resigned
431	C. A. Ussher	Resigned
188	A. C. Williamson	Resigned

Committee Meeting, June 12th 2021, Moor Farm, North Yorkshire.

At last – a face to face Committee meeting, which is so preferable to the Zoom ones I have tried to conduct as your Chairman. It was a joy to welcome the whole Committee to Moor Farm for the meeting. Roz treated us to a fabulous lunch on the patio, after which we sat around the dining table with plenty of fresh air in an attempt to keep the members awake after our indulgence.

Our present Committee have been very diligent with all members being present at every meeting since March 2017.

Nowadays we do Action Minutes meaning that names are put against any items during the meeting where someone says they will do something. My job as Chairman is to make sure that everyone is doing what they promise which leads to the Association being run efficiently and jobs getting done.

Andrew Cragg, our busy Membership Secretary and Treasurer, gave us his report. The main theme was the subscriptions, which are taken on April 25th each year. As mentioned in previous newsletters, we have had problems with Standing Orders not being actioned or recognised by the banks. Consequently, we were hoping to convert everyone to GoCardless, which is a Direct Debit system, fairly quickly.

Disappointingly, quite a few members have not yet converted, despite this being well published. If you are one of those, please contact our Treasurer acragg@brookerfarm.co.uk and he will set it up for you.

This is where the BUT comes – you are then responsible for cancelling your old Standing order. We cannot do it for you. We have several members who are now paying by direct debit as well as by standing order. The Treasurer has done his best to remind members to contact their bank, or cancel it themselves online. Unbelievably, we still have some members paying the original £5.00 membership fee from years ago, as well as the current fee. Some retired members and even deceased members are still paying their fee, but it is now beyond our control as they have become uncontactable!

Andrew then went on to give the Treasurer's report showing the latest accounts and the budget for 2021 / 2022. We are showing a small profit for 2021 and also showing a small projected profit for 2022. Thank you Andrew, your work is invaluable for the Association.

We moved onto the Events Secretary's report. This must have been the most challenging time for our enthusiastic and untiring events secretary, due to the volatile COVID situation. Some events have been planned for going on 2 years and are only just looking as though they will be carried out. Not only that but we must make sure we don't fall foul of any Government restrictions, which involves Neville in even more work.

My thoughts go out to the organisers of these events as well, as the last thing they want is to have to start rescheduling their meetings and then rescheduling.

Neville is already planning the 2022 calendar including a possible London event again in February. The recent FFA survey brought out more ideas for visits. We are also gathering ideas for a 50th anniversary celebration of the FFA in 2024. Any more ideas to Neville please neville.stops@gmail.com

The Eventbrite booking system on the EVENTS page of the website is now in use and I am sure you will find it slick and easy, compared with trying to find the reply slips that fell out of the newsletter and then having to write a cheque out to the organiser, post it and then get a reply back saying that your email address is illegible or the cheque is made out to the wrong payee. Once you have used the new system you will find it so much clearer and easier. If you can buy something on Amazon, then this is even easier!

Our President and Andrew Cragg are going to have a meeting with Hayward Insurance as there has been a lack of communication between them and us recently. There has also been changes in staff at Haywards since the original airstrip and liability cover was taken out. They will clarify our cover for the officers of the Association and see how the airstrip insurance is going that we can offer to members.

Finally, we must acknowledge the work that Giles Abrey is doing modernising our newsletter and website. I think you must agree that the last newsletter in particular, was very interesting and readable with good content in a time when there were no FFA meetings to report on. Giles will keep coming up with new ideas as well as making improvements and adding content to the newsletter and new website.

Paul Stephens

IMPORTANT Membership Matters

1. Change to Direct Debit – GOCardless

Members will remember that we are moving from standing order to direct debit for payment of the subscription. The process started 10 months ago and despite an email and a reminder there are still 136 members who have not responded.

If you have not set up the direct debit with GOCardless then PLEASE Go to the website; News > Subscriptions **https://ffa.org.uk/membership-subscriptions/ and click the link**

If you're not sure then please **Email treasurer@ffa.org** or **ring the office** on 01303 874251

2. This years subscription

Thank you to all those who have moved over to direct debit. Unfortunately, 69 of you forgot to cancel the standing order and paid the subscription twice. The Committee agreed at the last meeting that any additional, un-refunded subs be put in a suspense account and that any remaining un-refunded after one year will be released back as donations. We know who you are but we do not have your bank details to make the refund automatically and we simply don't have the resources to contact you all individually.

3. Transmitting Blind

We have lost touch with the following members and have been unable to raise them by any conventional means. Hello! We get your sub, we think you get the newsletters but you are not getting any emails through which we now announce details of all events. If you are one of these, please get in touch :

- **Charles Fergusson**
- **William Mumford**
- **Peter Miller**
- **Adam Silvester**
- **Colin Suckling**
- **Roger Warner**
- **Roger Windley**

4. Flying Farmers Emails

We now use emails to send you important regulatory information, requests from members and most importantly, details of events and booking links. There is a 60% cohort of members who regularly open emails and while we contact those whose emails are undelivered we can do nothing about those that go to spam or an unused inbox.

If you are not getting regular emails from info@ffa.org.uk and you want them then please contact us on the website, info@ffa.org.uk or 01303 874251

GAP – General Aviation Partnership Report July 2021

There have been a couple of meetings since I last reported in the March Newsletter but I regret that there is little of import or novelty to impart that hasn't already gone out by email. So instead, I will step back and look at some of the wider issues in the GA landscape.

When the CAA first raised the profile of electronic conspicuity by offering money towards the purchase of EC devices it was done on the basis of "our safety" in avoiding other aircraft. Could there be a hidden agenda? Adoption of EC devices by the pilot community is certainly an enabler for technologies that do not benefit us directly and a solution to problems not created by us. Widespread adoption of EC will enable the smallest airfields to acquire "virtual radar" and, we are soon going to be faced with sharing class G with unmanned aerial vehicles which do not have a Mk1 eyeball.

The problem with EC devices at the moment is that for many metal aircraft, they will only "see" out of the window they are placed in and even with the best view all around, they will only see a fraction of the aircraft that are actually out there due to uptake and interoperability. Some argue that *some* is better than *none*, others, that *some* is dangerous and its better to have none and keep your eyes open. Whatever your persuasion, if you want to put EC external aerials in your Part 21 aircraft, it's worth seeing if this could be done through the new CS-STAN regulations with just a sign-off by a qualified engineer. The benefits of CS-STAN do not appear to be widely known throughout the industry, including some maintenance engineers.

We are suffering from a rash of restricted airspace for drone operations which, like Southampton zone during COVID, is turned on and off like a light switch. The CAA recognises that this is not a long term solution for drone operations but the prospect of Amazon delivery drones is a very real one. How drones will be able to operate autonomously in class G airspace alongside manned aviation is the big question. You remember that one of the government's GA mantras is to maintain a network of airfields, well, one of the purposes of this network of airfields as demonstrated in a recent presentation by Future Flight (an organisation set up to scope out a vision for, you guessed it, flight in the future), is to be a "network for autonomous freight delivery". It's easy to imagine delivery drones occupying airspace below 500' but at some point drones and GA have to land so how do we share that space?

At Lydd, there is a civilian drone operating in the English channel. It looks like a little brother of the military MQ-9 Reaper. They won't tell you what they are doing but it's fairly clear that they are looking for inflatable dinghies. Not that it would have worried many of us recently but that's why the entire channel between Dover and Calais is covered by temporary restricted airspace. Further, when the drone comes back to Lydd it transitions from autonomous to controlled flight and a couple of guys standing on the intersection bring it in like a model aeroplane. For 15 minutes everything else stops, no departures, no arrivals, planes orbiting at all points of the compass waiting to join the circuit. Why can't it just join the circuit like everyone else?

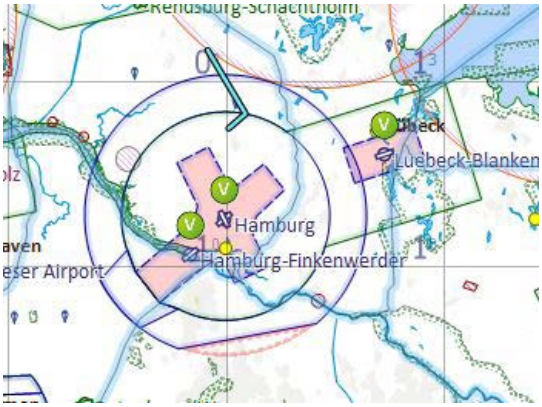
Then, there is the prospect of unmanned aerial taxis; surely they will want to fly above 500'?

If you've seen the films Blade Runner or Fifth Element you'll know what I'm talking about.

When they announced that the new head of the GA unit was to be the current head of the unmanned aerial vehicle unit and that she was going to head them both, I thought it was an inspired decision to tackle the challenges of segregation. Now, they have decided to merge the two units. Not so good I think; where a common head can juggle the needs of the two sectors, will a joint unit lose the focus? This merger, along with a significant turnover of staff, redundancies, resignations, COVID, Brexit legislative dis-harmonisation and a new faulty medical computer system means no big surprise then, that the recent meetings have been only functional.

One area where the CAA has not dropped the ball is infringements. With COVID enforced idleness, it's been difficult to track meaningful trends recently but they are convinced that the "problem" is still getting worse. As pilots, are we getting less competent? Probably not, but increased reporting of the most minor kind and overly complex airspace certainly doesn't help matters. The CAA believes that prevention is better than prosecution so we've had infringement seminars open to all and a veritable tsunami of Skywise narratives on common hotspots. Such has been the weight of precaution that I regret that I've become "infringement-weary". Now I have to hold my hand up and say that for the first time after 40 years of flying (on 14th July to be precise – any adulation welcome), I nearly bust the TMA south of Gatwick after I left Popham with the QFE set. After our recent, very successful meeting at Gerald Corbin's strip where Rob Hart from Sky Demon demonstrated some of the more elusive functions of the product, how appropriate then, that it was Sky Demon which saved my bacon with a judicious "Warning - London TMA in 10miles".

On a positive note, using newly granted powers, the CAA is committed to reclaiming unused controlled airspace structures and they are working on a first draught of the airspace modernisation plan which they plan to discuss in the autumn of this year. They are a little bit behind for the staffing reasons given above. Unbelievably, they had powers to create airspace but none to remove it! Lets hope that some common sense comes back into airspace design.





Incidentally, GAP stands for "General Aviation Partnership". It involves over 30 GA stakeholders from models to business jets who meet regularly with the CAA. I remember when it was called "The CAA General Aviation Consultative Committee. It's interesting to note that the change of name wholly reflects the evolution of the forum since consultation seems to have fallen out of the meetings in common with the name. It's a perennial complaint that seems to fall on deaf ears or perhaps ears deafened by the tinnitus of Brexit and COVID. Talking of government consultation nowadays, it's funny how the questions posed seem to be predicated on the desired outcome.

Finally, the DTI has issued a "Roadmap for GA". It has lots of words in it. Trying to re-arrange the words to provide anything that might constitute some substance is quite impossible. Let's be kind, our Minister has consistently shown a deep commitment to GA in direction of policy and allocation of resources. Let's hope that this aspirational document drives some inspirational change.

Andrew Cragg

General Aviation Awareness Council

The Next Board meeting will be at the GAAC AGM at Wycombe Air Park on 17 September

The aerodrome current status table can be found here:
https://www.gaac.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/AERODROMES-UPDATE-START-Q3-2021.pdf

GASCo ONLINE MEETING Wednesday 26th March 2021

The General Aviation Safety Council

Many of us only know Gasco through their safety evenings. So having lost the contract to a commercial company, Astral Aviation Consultants, the ensuing discussion occupied a large part of the meeting. However the chairman showed a brave face and will address future strategy at the next board meeting. The head of the CAA General Aviation Unit and her procurement officer gave a confidential briefing on the outcome. In the meantime Gasco will continue with their mission 'Saving lives in Aviation'.

Lord Davies, the chairman of the all party parliamentary group, will hold the government to account in making the UK the best country in the world for GA to operate (in light of Brexit and our departure from EASA).

The LAA's Steve Slater requested that pilots use their common sense when normal flying resumes after lock down.

John Thorpe will shortly finish his presentation on 40 years of accident data. Contact John at **johnthorpe91@gmail.com**

Rick Holt



The General Aviation Safety Council (GASCo)

By GASCo's Chief Executive, Mike O'Donoghue

Over fifty years ago the General Aviation Safety Committee was founded to collect, collate and disseminate flight safety information among users of UK registered general aviation aircraft and to study all matters affecting, or which might affect, flight safety in UK general aviation making recommendations to interested parties, as necessary. The committee was granted charitable status in 1965 and became today's council or GASCo in 1994 subsequently being restructured as a charitable company in 2003. The number of organisations has swelled from its original group of six to over forty today and we are privileged to count The Flying Farmers' Association among our members. The Council meets three times a year, traditionally the subject of discussion has been recent accidents and incidents in order to try to decide on the action to be taken to reduce the possibility of a recurrence. The effect of proposed legislation, airspace changes and the like are also discussed. The philosophy underlying all these activities is that a real and lasting improvement in general aviation flight safety can only be brought about through education and understanding, i.e. "*Safety Through Knowledge*".

I joined the GASCo team in 2010 and one of my early visits to a members' event was an invitation to accompany GASCo's then Treasurer, David Corbett, in his Europa Monowheel from Shobdon for a fly-in to Peter Gale's farm strip near my home in Wiltshire. David was a dedicated and much missed flying farmer who was staunchly dedicated to the Association and GASCo. The trip sticks in my mind to this day for its well organised blend of fun and information. Peter Gale had organised the fly-in issuing comprehensive joining instructions with an emphasis on flight safety and arranged a most instructive and interesting tour of the defence lands on Salisbury Plain concentrating on the agricultural aspects, wildlife management and the farming challenges presented by the terrain. This included a visit to a tenant farmer and a briefing and lunch at Headquarters Defence Training Estates, Salisbury Plain at Westdown Camp.

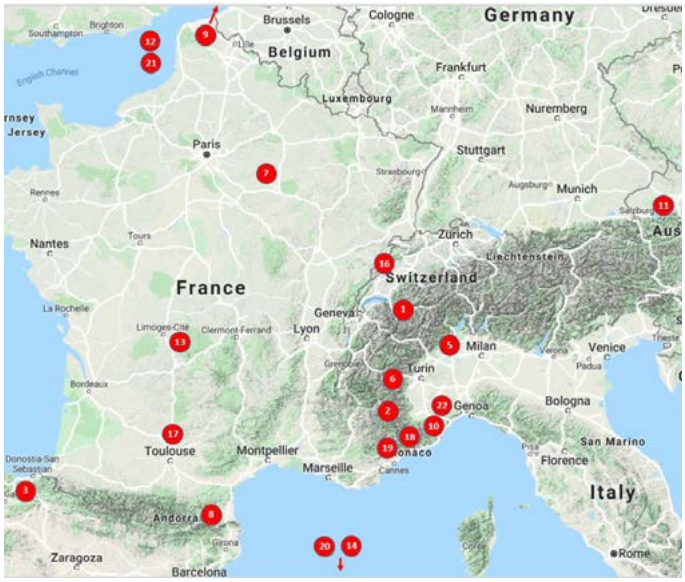


Association members receiving a briefing on the close quarters battle range at Copehill Down, Salisbury Plain Training Area by a member of the range staff, a sergeant major from the Parachute Regiment.

I note that visits like this to places of farming and aviation interest ranks high among the Association's list of activities and that over the last 40 years the Association has visited almost every country in Europe and some North African countries. This reminded me of some recent research that we did looking at fatal accidents involving UK registered aircraft over a ten-year period. It seemed that a disproportionate number occurred during flights on the Continent and when the locations of these were plotted on a map, a pattern emerged in that all but one or two involved high terrain or poor weather or a combination of the two (see map below). We intend to hold a seminar or webinar covering these risks and ways in which they could be mitigated.



The late David Corbett of the Flying Farmers' Association thanking all concerned at the end of the tour



We are also arranging a Ditching and Sea Survival seminar at Andark Diving Services, Swanwick, Southampton on Tuesday 21st September 2021. Since flying to the Continent involves flying over water, this may be of interest to members planning an overseas trip in 2022.

Many FFA members will have attended a GASCo safety evening which we have been running on behalf of the CAA at locations throughout the country for the past eleven years. Sadly, the CAA decided that it did not wish to continue with this style of event terminating our contract at the end of March this year. Although we put in a great deal of work on responding to the tender, we were unsuccessful in our bid for the replacement contract which called for a contractor to lead on the CAA's safety promotional work delivering events to a wider audience. This new contract was awarded to Astral Aviation Consulting Limited, and its programme of events consists of webinars and videos placing much greater emphasis on social media than GASCo has done in the past with the intention of attracting a more diverse audience particularly those who do not attend existing safety events. We have been addressing this already in GASCo but feel that there is a danger of creating a gap for those audiences who still favour physical events. We intend to fill this while, at the same time, delivering seminars such as the ones described earlier together with webinars on those GA safety topics which we know are relevant from our years of experience in safety promotion and education. We are able to tailor these to meet the specific safety needs of our members as well as catering for all general aviation pilots.

Without the CAA funding previously available to us, we will have to cut down on the number of physical safety evenings, but we are confident that by judicious choice of venues and the use of online webinars together with our attendance at events and popular safety seminars we will be able to provide targeted flight safety information to our members reaching even more of the GA Community, complementing, and reinforcing the work done by the CAA's new commercial contractor.

There has been a hiatus in issues of our free monthly flight safety newsletter, *Flight Safety Extra*, but we have a new compiler, and the July edition will be published at the end of the month. If you would like a copy and you are not on the mailing list, just send an email to our Office Manager, Penny Gould and she will add your name to the list. (**penny@gasco.org.uk**)



As well as covering theory, GASCo Ditching & Sea Survival Seminars provide practical training in sea survival using GA lifesaving equipment with a high degree of realism which includes an escape from submerged aircraft using the 'dunker' trainer.

I would like to end by thanking all members of the Flying Farmers' Association for their generous support of GASCo over the years and look forward to many more years to come. The Council relies on the contributions made by its member organisations and from subscriptions and donations made by readers of *GASCo Flight Safety*. As the Council is a registered charity, it also benefits from Gift Aid by those making contributions out of taxed income.

FLYING FARMERS ASSOCIATION



FFA umbrellas.
They are 130 cm diameter, fibreglass construction, wind and storm proof – meaning that the umbrella can blow inside out and return to its original form without causing any damage. They feature a safety push button opening system and a rubber pistol grip handle. The colour is navy blue with the FFA logo on four panels.

FFA Clothing

Item	Logo	Sizes	Price
New Style Jackets		M, L, XL	£40.00
Lined Fleece Jackets		S,M	£30.00
Unlined Jacket (discontinued)	Old style	M	Half price £10.00
New Style Body Warmer		M, L, XL	£28.00
Unlined Fleece Waistcoat	Old style	S	Half price £8.00
Sweat Shirts		S, M, XL	£14.00
Sweat Shirt	Old style	S	Half price £7.00
Polo Shirts		S, L	£12.00
Polo Shirts	Old Style	M	Half price £6.00
Baseball Caps			£5.50
Ties			£15.00
Umbrellas			£29.00

The above clothing is available from stock. If your size isn't listed, it can be ordered. Please note reduced prices on old stock with old logo. Prices do not include postage. For all orders contact Roz Stephens **07773 052001** or **chix@farmline.com**

Results of the Flying Farmers Survey

A big thank you to the 90 members who filled in our recent survey.

About you :

Hours flown:
Removing those members who are current or former commercial pilots with tens of thousands of hours, the average member has flown 550 hours

Additional Ratings	No	%
No ratings	27	30%
IMC	24	27%
IR	13	14%
Multi	12	13%
Commercial	9	10%
Instructor	5	6%

Membership of Other Organisations	No	%
LAA	38	42%
AOPA	24	27%
BMAA	10	11%

Flying Farmers Events

Would you host an event?
57% of members who responded said they would be happy to host an event.
(Perhaps this reflects the fact that 60% of our members have an airstrip)

What sort of Event do you prefer?
Once you remove the members who no longer attend and those who will come to anything, there is a clear preference for visits with farming themes along with good support for the informal pop-in meetings which we introduced in 2019 and which came into their own recently when more formal events were not possible.

A good steer for our events secretary when planning events. Thank you.

Ideas for events
Thank you for the many offers of fly-ins and visits to members farms. A common theme was visits relating to diversification, regenerative farming and biological control.
Other suggestions included :

- "The Wing" Bremont's new (watch) manufacturing facility
- A STOL competition
- An International Cargo Hub, eg East Midlands
- Brooklands Museum
- Dengie Crops - Alfalfa
- Digester Plant.
- Fly in to London (any suggestions for landing William?)
- Heathrow Tower
- Isles of Scilly
- Kemble to see de-construction of commercial jets
- Kennedy Space Centre (Our next US tour Ray!)
- Knepp Castle Estate - re-wilding
- Local cider factory (local to you Robert?)
- National Arboretum Alrewas
- RAF Welford Museum and Munitions store
- Rolls Royce Museum Derby
- The Shuttleworth Collection
- Tour of Irish or Scottish strips
- Vinyard and winery
- Visit a farm that hosts glamping
- Williams Racing at Wantage

Ideas for the 50th Anniversary

Standing back from the detail, the clear preference was for a big fly-in in the summer to a central location, over a weekend, with a marquee with lots going on by way of presentations, eating, socialising, along with local visits and an emphasis towards maximum inclusion for existing members along with attracting new members and particularly the next generation.

Thank you to Roger Bell for the idea of Neville Stops emerging from a giant cake!

Airstrips

The results show that we are a busy bunch. It is interesting to note how few members have neither agreements with their residents or strip liability insurance. It is a personal but pertinent decision and we hope to generate a discussion about this in the future. The information will be very useful for our ongoing discussions with Haywards about the our Airfields policy and others about a potential indemnity agreement.

Members with Airstrip	63%
Average number of aircraft at strip	3
Max number of aircraft	20
Strips with just members aircraft	51%
Average movements per year overall	128
Average movements per year, member plane only at strip	45
Have Hangar(s) on airstrip	94%
Applying for Border Force Certificate of Agreement	47%
Have an agreement with residents	8%
Would be interested in a FFA model indemnity agreement	80%
Have strip liability insurance	33%
Have safeguarded their strip with the local Authority	20%

FFA information services

1. We asked if we had got the balance of information right in the emails that we send and we are delighted to report that 100% of respondents thought that we had. Please use our email service to share information or ask for help from other members.
2. With the rise of the webinar during COVID, we asked if there was any appetite for them when things return to normal. 67% thought that we should so we will look into doing something in the winter outside our normal event program.
3. We asked if we should circulate the GASCo safety email and 85% said we should.
4. On the issue of what additional information we could send there were a few who still miss the published member list along with a desire for some sort of online forum. The member list used to cost over £1000 to print and circulate and was quickly out of date. All member information is available online now along with details of member strips and a picture in Google Maps! (The member list can be printed from the website if you have a robust printer). The idea of a forum is very attractive but may come at a cost both in administration time, moderation and setup. We will investgate.

Insurance

A key feature of the survey was insurance and with reports of premiums increasing sharply, we released the findings by email immediately since members could have been renewing at any time. There were 9 companies mentioned with 3 clear favorites, Visicover, Haywards and Traffords filling 82% of the responses. Recent horror stories of premiums doubling on renewal were evident but not reflected in the overall increase which was 15%. In April 2020, one of our members, after waiting for 4 weeks was told with 24hrs to go to renewal that the premium was going to double. At best, incompetence and at worst, sharp practice.

Our Member, Neil McConachie, who used to work in the industry commented :

"Insurance premiums have been going up pretty much across the board in the past 12 months, aviation included. It is mainly due to Covid, which has cost the insurance industry a lot of money and this has resulted in what's known in the industry as a 'hard market' where premiums rise sharply. This happens in the insurance world every so often after large and expensive insured events, typically natural disasters. Aviation insurance has been one of the most unprofitable lines of business for the insurance industry for many years, and has mostly lost the insurers money over the past decade. The aviation insurance industry, some of it anyway, has 'had enough' losing money and is either pulling out to concentrate on more profitable lines, or is pushing premiums up a lot."

See the full results below.

Premiums		**% increase**		
	Responses	***Lowest***	***Highest***	***Average***
Visicover	16	-4	50	16
Hayward	14	0	100	11
Trafford	10	3	45	14
Crispin Spiers	2	5	5	5
FlyCovered	2	0	0	0
Sydney Charles	2	5	35	20
Heritage	1	0	0	0
Alan & Thomas	1	85	85	85
H R Jennings	1	25	25	25
	49	-4	100	14

In terms of satisfaction, most members were largely happy with their provider although Haywards and Visicover both scored some sixes which dropped them down the table.

Satisfaction		**Score (1-10)**		
	Responses	***Lowest***	***Highest***	***Average***
Heritage	1	10	10	10.0
H R Jennings	2	9	10	9.5
Trafford	15	7	10	9.0
FlyCovered	2	8	10	9.0
Visicover	20	6	10	9.0
Crispin Spiers	3	7	10	8.7
Sydney Charles	2	8	9	8.5
Hayward	17	6	10	8.2
Grand Total	62			8.8

Of course, this information is the based on the experience of your fellow members and does not constitute a recommendation from the Association. If nothing else, we hope it might give you a few options if you wanted to shop around next time.

Andrew Cragg

SurveyMonkey

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE FLYING APPS ?

There have been a few discussions between members about what are the most useful apps for aviation, with regards to weather information, TAF's & METAR's, Flight Planning etc We thought we would ask the question and collate feedback which we will present in the December newsletter.

PLEASE LET US KNOW so that we can feature in the December Newsletter, emails to giles@abrey-farms.co.uk.

Programme 2021



We started the year in another lockdown, not sure when events might run again, this all changed. Our first event was a Pop in visit to Paul & Roz's farm. We were blessed with the weather that day, but had a limited number attend to comply with the COVID rules.

Our first main event was run by John & Clare Golden at Gerald Corbins farm. We had a fascinating talk in the morning, followed by a very informative presentation by Rob Hart, from Skydemon. Following on from that we had Tony Fisher's 2 day event, which had been planned for last year. The event was a very relaxed 2 days. The week after we had a spur of the moment visit, which was put together by John Milne & Rebecca Rayner, involving a company called Hempspan. The last visit we had in July, as this newsletter was going to print, was to Belvoir Castle.

Looking ahead for the rest of this year, we still have Park Farm, (which is now fully booked) and will have taken place by the time you read this newsletter. Later in August is Harper Adams, held over from last year.

We will be holding some pop in visits through the rest of this year. These and all other events will be run through Eventbrite, which we now have a much better understanding of. As an organiser this is making life a great deal easier, and with a more robust process. Lastly we are putting together a programme for next year, which we are hoping to have more details on for the December newsletter, failing that they will be on the Website.

The Committee and I would like to again thank all members who have taken time out to put these events together, despite the limitaions due to COVID.

N. Stops

Pop-Ins

- Venues and details TBC
- We will work within the COVID guidelines whatever they are on the day.

Events planned for 2021

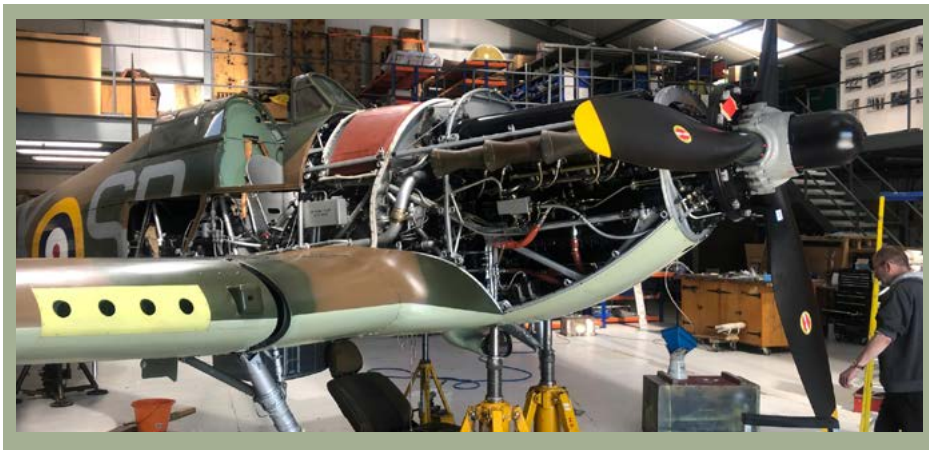
- 18th August 2021 – **Harper Adams University**, Shropshire – Roger Bell – **Spaces available**
- 20th October 2021 – **2021 AGM**, Leeds East Airport – Gordon Bellerby
  If anyone is interested in staying over please contact Gordon directly by Thursday 26th August via email; gordon@jgbellerby.com.
- Date TBC – Hawker Restorations – Elmsett, Suffolk

Events postponed until 2022

- Date TBC – **Faccombe Estate**, Landing at Thruxton, Hampshire.
- Date TBC – **Balistics testing**, Wiltshire
- Date TBC – **FFA Study Tour 2022**, Isle of Man and Ireland – Peter Gale – **Fully booked**

We would like to thank all the organisers of events for making these meetings possible. If you happen to see anything in your area that would form the basis of an interesting FFA visit, then please contact Neville Stops (neville.stops @gmail.com) or Gordon Bellerby (gordon@jgbellerby.com).

Events such as these are arranged by FFA members on a voluntary basis. It is accepted by those who participate that nothing undertaken by the FFA collectively or members individually shall be construed as establishing a duty of care nor in anyway removing or modifying the duties, responsibilities or obligations of pilots or land owners in relation to any event and attendance thereat. All information provided in these programmes is purely advisory and should ALWAYS be verified from official sources.



Hawker Restorations – Date TBC

A Hawker Hurricane is nearing completion after an extensive restoration at Elmsett in Suffolk. This aircraft has good provenance as it was involved in the Battle of Britain in its original state.

We are still exploring the possibility of a visit and will communicate details as they become available.

Harper Adams – 18th August 2021

Harper Adams University is a public university located close to the village of Edgmond, near Newport, in Shropshire, England. Established in 1901, the university is a specialist provider of higher education for the agricultural and rural sector. The university provides more than 50 foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes to students from over 30 countries. The university is set within a 550 hectare working farm.

Roger Bell went to Harper Adams University College and has arranged a one day visit. Harper has now got over 800 students from all over the world. An investment of more than £20 million has created an attractive rural campus that celebrates the heritage and status as a modern university with all the teaching, research, leisure, and conference facilities expected of a modern establishment.



Harper Adams University – Agricultural Engineering Innovation Centre



AGM, 20th October 2021, Leeds East.

The AGM is planned for Wednesday 20th October at Leeds East. There was talk of making it an overnighter and we would try and arrange a visit to Taylors Tea and Coffee factory in Harrogate on the Thursday, but due to COVID Taylors are not allowing any visits at the moment so Neville suggested that we run the AGM as a stand alone event, if anyone is interested in staying over please contact me directly by **Thursday 26th August**. If there is enough interest I will try and arrange a visit somewhere.

Giles Abrey will plan to give a talk on his London–Capetown solo adventure

Gordon Bellerby,
gordon@jgbellerby.com

MEMBER AD

Exmoor Forest Farms – Fly, dine and sleep at their new pub on Exmoor

MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY an unusual radio call on a Flying Farmers outing. Some members will remember the trip to visit Exmoor Forest Farms in 2015, remarkable for cloudless blue skies and Neville Stops engine failure and unsheduled landing in a field of wheat. He none the less arrived for lunch on time, unruffled by the experience.

A month ago, the farm acquired the local pub, the Exmoor Forest Inn at Simonsbath. As part of the move to diversify the farming business, a farmhouse has also been demolished and is being rebuilt as a lodge which will be open in November. The farm already has a ten-bed holiday let.

It may seem an unpropitious time to leap into the hospitality sector, but the farm is more heavily dependent of government farm support and the future remains uncertain for farming such marginal land. Nowhere has more natural capital and tourism has to be part of the future of the farm. There are wonderful walks on the moor and along the River Barle. Simonsbath is only 20 minutes from the sea.

The airstrip it is at 1500 ft ASML 27/09 with good approaches at each end and a slight dome shape with a slight slope on the threshold of 27. The surface is very smooth and the 825 metres useful as any crosswinds can be brisker than at sea level. It is only suitable between May and early September as although well drained, the rainfall on Exmoor is legendary. It is important to ring and check it is dry enough.

The pub can arrange a pickup from the strip which is about two miles north of Simonsbath. As the pub has only recently changed hands, food is only available in the evenings - Wednesday to Sunday so ideal for fly, dine and sleep. The pub has 10 rooms. Please check availability at exmoorforestinn.com.

Gilbert Greenall



Barton Farm Airstrip, Simonsbath, Exmoor.
N51 08 00 W03 44 17
What 3 Words: ///jetliner.resist.heap 800 m grass 27/09
Telephone 01643 831341 / 07788956171

Pop-In Visit to Paul & Roz Stephens' Moor Farm in North Yorkshire, 13th June 2021

I have always believed that one of the biggest enjoyments of the FFA is to visit other members' strips and have a nosey at how they are making a living, from what must be the most enjoyable occupation on this planet. It's not always the easiest job and certainly challenging at times, but the satisfaction factor of showing our pride and joy to a group of 30 fellow farmers and aviators, on a perfect summer's Sunday, ranks high in my book.

Planning the weather for an event, months ahead, is a skill that has taken me a lifetime to acquire, but at last I got it right! A high pressure sat neatly over middle England ensuring settled weather and some warm June sunshine. Equally satisfying was that the weather the day before was also perfect as we hosted an FFA committee meeting on the Saturday with most of the Committee members staying over for the Pop-in meeting the next day with us at Moor Farm.

The morning of the 13th June dawned, and it wasn't long before an aircraft was heard approaching Moor Farm airstrip. For the next couple of hours, the 15 aircraft arrived as if spaced out by air traffic control with one landing about every 8 minutes. I delegated the radio work and parking to Neville, so this unplanned spacing made it easy to guide people in and get them parked before the next one called on the Safety Comm – which I hadn't realised had changed recently from 135.475 to 135.480.

To keep within Government guidelines, we were only allowed a group of 30 to gather outside. This wasn't too much of a constraint as we were also limited with parking space on the strip. However, with a bit of overlapping with high wing, low wing, we just managed to get the 15 aeroplanes parked neatly so that everyone could leave at will without having to move other aircraft.

As this was the first FFA gathering this year due to COVID, nearly everyone on landing said how good it was to get out and about and meet up again with fellow members. This banter was carried on whilst having a barbeque lunch on our patio at the house, which I must thank the rest of my family – Roz and my daughter and son-in-law, Katie and James for preparing and carrying out on the day. It ended up being quite an extended lunch, so the farm tour bit was cut short as people had to start making a move to get back home.

However, we took a smaller group on a whistle stop tour round part of the farm on a trailer, then had a look in the machinery shed, the grain store, one of the biomass boilers and had a look through the viewing window of one of the broiler chicken sheds.









Photos on this page: Everyone enjoying being out together for the first time this year, BBQ lunch at Moor Farm house. **Above right:** Poppy the terrier.



Above: a farm tour of the machinery shed, the grain store, one of the biomass boilers and a look through the viewing window of one of the broiler chicken sheds.

All departed safely until the very last when David Keene and Richard Butler aborted their take off in their Scottish Aviation Bulldog in RAF red and white. I guessed there was a hare on the runway or something, but when he shut down again on the second attempt, I knew there a problem. He taxied in and said that his ASI was not indicating anything, so I tried a bit of a gentle suck and blow job on the pitot, but didn't get much joy, so to speak. We came to the conclusion that David would fly by his experience and when the speed felt right he would rotate – which is what he did. Later in the journey, with the use of pitot heat, for some reason the ASI came back to life.

What a glorious day and thank you to everyone for coming. We asked for £10 per head on booking for the event, with all the proceeds going to the Yorkshire Air Ambulance – not only because we feel it is a very worthwhile and appropriate charity, but as it happens we had one land in our front paddock recently for a little emergency. With thanks to everyone, we will send them £450.00.

Paul Stephens



Sky Demon Presentaion – Dorset



On Wednesday, the 30th of June 2021 24 aircraft and 80 flying farmers met at Bokerley Farm East Woodyates courtesy of Gerald Corbin and at the invitation of John and Clare Golden. We were greeted by the inimitable dynamo of Neville Stops who had arrived at 0700 to deal with arrivals and provide Air Traffic Control and general airfield organisation. After coffee and some of the best bacon and sausage burgers I have ever had it was time to enter Gerald's immaculate new grain store which was set out with Covid compliant chairs set a distance apart and equipped with pads and FFA pens by John and Clare Golden.

The first speaker of the day was Tim Cooper, journalist, Merchant Navy officer, pilot, war correspondent, entrepreneur and all-round fascinating guy. He was able to use an excellent media sound system and huge back lit screen that could be seen from 25 meters away at the back of the store.

Tim has had a varied and interesting life he first qualified as a Merchant Navy Officer following training at South Shields technical college. He then spent time as a war correspondent in Africa. Finding himself in Uganda and seeing a business opportunity he bought a lease on a 500 acre island on Lake Victoria 22 miles from Kampala acquiring a 49 year lease for $15,000.

Initially the only way to get to the island was by boat and we were treated to a number of maritime photographs of various types of craft and their misadventures including one poor soul whose vessel turned completely turtle but it seemed to be within walking distance of the shore so was being rescued by some of the soldiers from the Ugandan army which Tim had hired to protect him.

Initially he set out to farm the island, growing bananas and pineapples. We saw pictures of various exotic birds of which there are allegedly 400 different species. Being on the equator Uganda has an attractive climate being never less than 20°C and never more than 30°C with the added advantage of the sun setting every evening at 7 pm. Curtailing outside work and signalling time for a cold one.

The first task once he had settled on the island was to build a home and this was achieved by creating concrete blocks mixed with locally quarried sand

The problem of designing and building a home was solved by reading the "Indian civil engineers handbook" The result was a stunning castle style building painted pink naturally.

Further enterprises were added to the farming business including growing coconuts and other staple food diets for the expanding population on the island and for export to the mainland. There is a sheltered bay which initially had no fish due to illegal netting by the locals. The advantage of this netting was that the crocodiles had departed from the area due to their habit of becoming entangled in the nets and getting the message that this was a Bad Place.

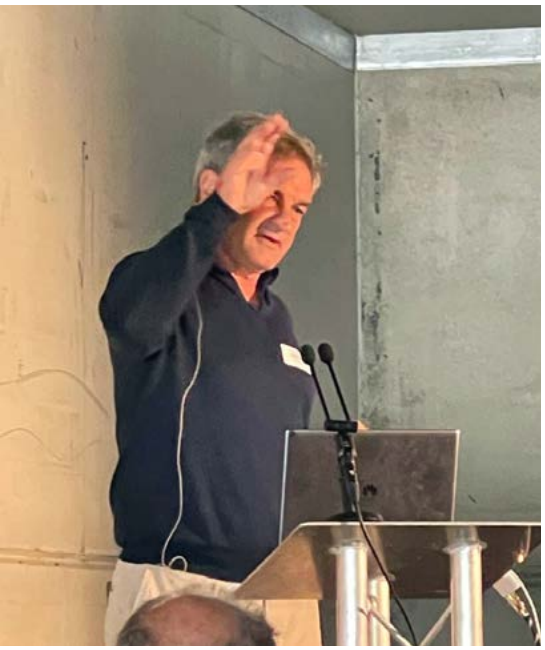
Other farming enterprises included pigs which although initially feral were domesticated and helped to clear the jungle undergrowth around the settlements and provide delicious food of course as most things in Africa seem to be eaten.

There was a small sheep flock of 200 head which unfortunately became depleted due to the habit of the shepherd who failed to dose them with their worm treatment causing them to die. Dead sheep were being quietly added to a large pit which the shepherd had created for the purpose.

The island is about 22 miles from Entebbe and although the weather was generally benign being on the Equator massive storms would appear at very short notice creating a violent and dangerous sea for any small craft trying to make the crossing.

The decision was made to create a runway for fixed wing aircraft which would be faster and safer than the surface craft lake crossing.

How to clear the jungle was solved by hiring yet more soldiers from the Ugan-



The first speaker of the day was Tim Cooper, journalist, Merchant Navy officer, pilot, war correspondent, entrepreneur

dan Army who set about hacking back the jungle with a will and some large pangas.

It was clear that it would be necessary to introduce some machinery to complete the levelling process of the ground to create a runway. A tractor with a Rotavator and fore-end loader was duly acquired on the mainland. Next problem was how to get the tractor to the island.

Tim appeared to have collected a good number of influential people in senior positions in the Ugandan government and after a phone call to the man in charge of the air force, a former Russian military helicopter was duly provided.

Someone had the bright idea of transporting the tractor to the Island as an under slung load beneath the helicopter. Tim being Tim and of an adventurous nature said that he would ride on the Tractor seat for the 22 mile crossing beneath the helicopter.

This was not a good idea in the eyes of the Ukrainian pilot. The pilot had little respect for the ability of the Ugandan army to successfully and safely attach an under slung load.

The tractor was eventually loaded inside the helicopter and came across as a conventional internal strapped down load.

The dirt runway was established as a 1100m long prepared strip after two months of hard work.

In order for a runway to be operated in Uganda it is first necessary for the Ugandan CAA to grant a licence for commercial use. The CAA licensing inspector said he would come and look at the strip to grant the license and could he drive to the site. He was told that he could not drive there because it was an on island in the lake and he would have to fly. This Civil Aviation Authority bureaucrat would not fly anywhere in any aircraft at all ever. What did he know about flying in Uganda that the rest of the World did not know? When it was suggested he may come on the boat that was rejected also.

Eventually a licence was forthcoming without an inspection having taken place.

One of the perennial problems running any form of external prepared service activity in Equatorial Africa is the presence of termites. These insects borrow under the ground and create 5 feet deep cavities as their nests. Any aircraft which happens to cross over the top of these cavities is likely to collapse into the termites home. Aircraft would stop suddenly while taxiing with one wheel in a deep hole - very alarming for all concerned. In all the time that there was a runway operating on the island there were only three prop strikes although we did see an alarming picture of an Antonov AN2 quietly sitting on the ground resting on one wheel and one wing tip.

One of the pilots who had begun to make regular visits to the island was a young lady who appeared to fit the bill as chatelaine of the newly built castle. So Emma Carter became part of the establishment and was able to help with the creation of an aviation business. However her predilection for aerobatics meant that any aircraft which was acquired had to be capable of aeros as well as carrying passengers. The only aircraft which completed this dual task was the Fuji.

As the aviation business expanded so the reputation of the business became widely known and enquiries began to come in for other types of work and an operating base was established in Entebbe.

When UB40 (a pop and reggae band) were booked to appear at Kampala the organisers requested a banner towing advertising campaign. This was achieved by acquiring a Piper Cub and hiring a pilot from USA with towing experience and the right aptitude.

When the Boeing arrived bearing the band UB40 the banner towing Piper Cub with its banner behind it flew alongside the aircraft as it landed and taxied off at Kampala airport which must have been exciting for the band sitting inside the aircraft and one imagines the pilots also.

Aviation became more important and more profitable so the need for more complex and larger aircraft became apparent. A PC 12 was acquired for running supplies into the military who were fighting a war in Somalia. Mogadishu is the main airport for the area where the military were operating. This had its own





Above left: Ungandan Army helping to clear the jungle to create the runway; **Above right:** Calling in a favour, a tractor is flown onto the island by a military helicoptor:

hazards because one side of the airport was held by al Shabaab and any aircraft which strayed across that side would be shot at.

The operating crews and support staff at Mogadishu were put up in temporary accommodation and each of them had a small bunker surrounded by sandbags to leap into when any noisy activity warranted it.

Returning to Uganda there was a problem with presidential aircraft wanting to have an exclusion zone that would have included the mainland base. A little gentle persuasion of local CAA officials using a photoshopped map moving the airstrip half a mile outside the exclusion zone solved the problem.

By now the aviation business had grown to 9 aircraft including two Cessna 210, two Fujis, two Cessna 421 Golden Eagles and the PC 12 among others. The Golden Eagles were used on a medevac task where the contract included payment for maintaining the aircraft and crew on the ground plus the cost of operation should they be called upon which as we were told was very remunerative. The aircraft were ferried from the UK by Tim and Emma separately using Djibouti as a staging post. There was one major hang-up with engineers for the C421s as under Ugandan CAA rules only Ugandan engineers could be employed on their maintenance. However there were no qualified engineers for those aircraft in Uganda. To add to the armoury of aircraft and equipment a crop spraying aircraft was acquired for a contract with Tilda Rice. A Pawnee was bought and another successful business was created.

When oil exploration was extended to offshore installations on lake Victoria a SeaBee was acquired for lake landings. The Ugandan CAA official responsible for certificating the SeaBee refused to accept that any land aircraft could land on water and refused to give permission for the use of the aircraft as an amphibian.

The information about Airfield and Airstrips in Africa was handed down from pilot to pilot and there was no settled organisation dealing with the compilation of any landing plates. So Tim and his friends and pilots created what they called Jungle Jeps. These were distributed freely to any interested parties at no cost in the interest of saving lives and expanding aviation generally around central Africa.

The ICAO began to take an interest in African aviation due to the great number of aircraft being lost. When they visited Uganda they found no organisation that came up to their standards of inspection and maintenance and summarily closed all airports and airlines. This meant that there was no AOC available and no further commercial activity could take place legally.

At this point Tim & Emma sold the business and returned to the UK.

The second part of Tim's address dealt with the increasing problem of unmanned aerial vehicles or drones as they have become known. There are recorded incidents of accidents where these UAVs have gone out of control one of which smashed into the ground near Goodwood quite close to a housing estate. This aircraft had wingspan of over 5 feet and weighed almost 100 kg. If it had hit any human being it would almost certainly have killed them. The background to the problem is the rush to introduce 'new technology.' This appears to always mean drones. The Department of Transport have taken to creating Temporary Danger Zones around random airfields. The imposition of these TDZs has not been put up for consultation and



Top left: View of the runway from the air; **Top right:** Runway on the island; **Bottom left:** Plane towing UB40 Banner; **Bottom right:** Emma Carter and the Islander.





Above left and right: Lunch time.

appears to have been imposed without consideration of the effect on all aviation but particularly General Aviation.. Their very existence is causing consternation and may well now be legal.

There is a need to motivate interested parties to combat this new menace. One way to do it is by writing hard copy letters and sending them by Royal Mail to local MPs with the threat and if nothing is done then you will not vote for them at the next election.

Emma and Tim are keeping very busy with Emma teaching at Goodwood and Tim involved in various enterprises and in journalism.

They have a Zlin 326 in which they are going to compete nationally. They propose to take it in turns to compete against each other which should make dinner in the evening interesting! They also have a 1936 Riley which they use for hill-climb competitions

Tim's talk was not only amusing, interesting and at times amazing but it was delivered in a charming and easy to listen to way supported by some beautiful photographs in Gerald Corbin's Grain store that had been emptied and chairs with clipboards and notepads installed for the assembled party. A large screen and Sound system completed what turned out to be an excellent lecture theatre.

We were treated to a wonderful breakfast on arrival with fresh tea, coffee and cold drinks. Lunch was an excellent spread of cold meats, salads with cheese and puddings. So good was it in fact that some members had trouble keeping their eyes open in the warm and comfortable chairs after lunch.

Thanks must be extended to John and Clare Golden for organising the day which was a resounding success, very well attended and blessed by good weather eventually, although the start of the day was a little muggy.

Gerald Corbin had cleaned out his grain store and allowed us to use his excellent grass strip with parking and his yard.

Roger Bell

Sky Demon Presentation

Rob Hart received a warm welcome for a much-anticipated talk on probably one of the most popular and user-friendly pieces of VFR aviation software available – Sky Demon. Sky Demon is a trading name of Divelements Limited. In 2006 Tim Dawson, managing director and chief software architect at Divelements, earned his private pilot's license. Shortly afterwards he began work on a tool to help him plan VFR flights, bringing together the various disparate pieces of information needed for such pilots to make decisions before flight. The tool continued to be developed as a hobby. In 2009 the technology used in the tool was ported to Windows CE and GPS functionality added, and at this point the decision was made to launch the project commercially. Thus, they entered the flight-planning and aviation GPS moving map industries; two industries that had until that point stagnated and received little of the attention they deserve.

Despite their growth it was amazing to hear that Sky Demon has a team of only four people. Tim Dawson (Managing director), Rob Hart (who joined over 10 years ago as the first employee at Sky Demon) Head of Sales and Marketing but does a little bit of everything, Hannah who looks after Tech Support (who happens to be Rob's sister) and Louise who overseas and maintains the data.

Rob went on to explain that "Sky Demon is about the vision and the patience to deliver this. Its development is based on what the



users want rather than what we think they want with the ultimate aim of taking the stress out of the cockpit, so if the answer isn't simple and smooth, they don't do it".

The software provides mapping for UK, Europe, South Africa, and many other parts of the globe. The simple to use and intuitive nature of the software has resulted in a rapid uptake by pilots. Customer tracking stopped about six years ago when the number of users reached 30-40,000. 50% of the users are from abroad with a lot of growth in Scandinavia and now interest in the U.S.A.

Eurocontrol aggregate all NOTAMS from around the world into one digital feed. Sky Demon then has systems that automatically

read them and display them on the map where possible (sometimes they are too big, or poorly written, so this isn't always possible – the NOTAM briefing tab should always be complete though). Frequency changes and map changes are kept updated in keeping with the AIRAC cycle, every 28 days – this is the chart update process that you will have noticed happening roughly once a month. Tim has a natural talent when it comes to software design and if frustrated with other developers will make his own program; in fact, recently he has completed a large renovation to the NOTAM reading system to specifically handle complex NOTAMs which are promulgated by AIC and improve how they are drawn on the map.

Rob Hart's Tips & Tricks

- **Play with it, Play with it, Play with it** – Sky Demon has many features and the best way to learn is playing with it on the ground rather than trying to learn in the air.
- **User Guide** – It is constantly changing so DON'T print off. Access via HELP in top bar
- **Customize Charts** – Stack of papers icon bottom right hand side of screen. Useful to have different mapping items at different stages of the flight
- **Aerial Photography** – Can be used to create a waypoint
- **Vertical Nav** – At the bottom of the screen very good for route planning. Press and drag up or down to alter heights on various legs of the flight to avoid airspace or high ground
- **Warning Tab** – This is a KEY function of Sky Demon. Designed as a safety net to any planning error
- **IFR Notams** – Unfortunately these can't be automatically clipped out by Sky Demon, but some can be manually removed
- **Simplifying notam list** – Use the "X" to remove and simplify notam list
- **Shortcut to flight details** – Press the Time & Distance icon (middle top of screen when route is planned)
- **Flight Planning** – The more you can tell it (for example take off time, aircraft type, cruise speed etc.) when flight planning the more it will do and SIMPLIFY for you ready for flight
- **Flyable Conditions Overview** – In the past TAF's & METARS have been used but now Sky Demon are also using other weather analysis. Pilots can also set up PERSONAL VFR minima
- **Rainfall Overlay** – To be used as an alternative to above. Weather functions are designed ONLY for use on the GROUND as there is NO robust internet in the air. The time slider can be used to look at weather predictions hours ahead
- **Airfields Tab** – YELLOW indicates the document is OLD. Press on it and it should update and turn GREEN. Do not try and download airfield information in flight.
- **Georeferencing Button** - (on RHS of some document lines) Puts the airfield chart over the map. Good when looking for the taxiway, and some VAC's can be shown this way too
- **Glide safe** – Puts a box around the aircraft. Good when going over water to know your glide range
- **Constant position readout** – Top centre. Very Useful. Also, if you press and hold a place on the map it will tell you at the top of the "what's here" menu how far you are from it. Useful when asked by ATC.
- **Radio Tab** – Quick summary of who I could talk too right now. The PRESSURE SETTING is also displayed at the top
- **Two finger touch** – Gives you info about what's happening between two points (doesn't work on android – check documentation for how to get this on android)
- **Aircraft Profile** – Weight & Balance (the most complicated part of Sky Demon). The loading envelope graph is useful, but requires a bit of time and patience transcribing from your operator's handbook to be precise
- **Approach Button** – This button is located at the bottom of the right-hand corner of the screen and pops up when near the airfield so you can plan your approach. Plots the circuit on the map where possible. Also, possible to tap an extended centreline to access these functions. Taxiways can be selected when on the ground for some airfields too.

Getting Ready to Fly

- **Pilots Log** – Give a full plan of the flight. You can either print or email to yourself
- **Simulate Button** – Press to run the flight. This is very useful as you can move the aircraft around and put it into situations so you can see the pop ups before you do the flight. You don't want to be discovering new things in flight!

A vote of thanks was given to Rob for a very informative talk highlighting to most of us that we are only touching the surface when it comes to the capabilities of Sky Demon!

Giles Abrey



Flying Farmers that attended the day, including hostes John and Clare Golden (kneeling centre front).

Vintage Extravaganza – Lincolnshire, 7/8th July 2021

Day 1-Visit 1. We'll Meet Again Museum.

For the first visit of this tour we travelled to the very smart new buildings of this award-winning WW2 museum on the coast at Freiston, the site of a WW1 airfield and some of the coastal defences for Boston. We were welcomed by our very enthusiastic hosts, Paul & Linda Britchford, who described how, over the past 35 years, this very impressive collection of weapons, uniforms and every other conceivable artifact related to the WW2 Home Front were displayed in a number of themed buildings.

The 'Blitz Experience', possibly aimed more for the younger visitor, gave an excellent impression of being on the ground in the centre of an air raid, by the use of lights, sound and pyrotechnics. The 'Home Front' building housed a remarkable collection of memorabilia tributing the contribution of the Women's Land Army, ARP Wardens, Police and others who fought on the home front. Welcome sustenance was provided at the WW2 themed 'Ration book Cafe'.

An excellent museum that is a real credit to Paul & Linda and their dedicated band of volunteers.

David Keene.

Visit 2. Thorpe Camp: RAF Woodhall Spa



English Electric Lightening



Bristol Bloodhound

Following the excellent lunch stop at the Red Lion at Revesby we were bussed on towards our hotel at Woodhall Spa. Just before arriving at the Spa town we visited Thorpe Camp which used to be the former Officers Mess, Drill Halls and NAAFI of the RAF Woodhall Spa, the former home to 617, 627, 619 and 97 Squadrons.

RAF Woodhall Spa was opened in 1942 and operated as a satellite station to RAF Coningsby with mostly Lancasters and Mosquitos. From the late 1950s it was used as a base for Bristol Bloodhound Missiles until 1964 when most of the site was sold off for agriculture or mineral extraction

The entrance to the site was "guarded" by an English Electric Lightning one side and a Bristol Bloodhound the other.

Inside the Camp gates we were greeted by one of the Camp's very efficient volunteers who made us complete the Covid tracing procedures in a very orderly fashion. We were then invited to meander around the Camp buildings at will.

The buildings had all been brought back to former glory from an overgrown and deserted former RAF facility. Each one housed a different display or artefacts and suchlike that reflected the history of the former RAF Woodhall Spa site.

One hut was dedicated to the Lancaster bomber and there was a forward fuselage section and a couple of Merlin engines, landing gear, propellers and gun turrets on display. There were a couple of huts showing exhibits from the cold war era and there was a Tornado cockpit with its weapons training simulator set up.

One display item that captured my attention was the arrester gear winch block mechanism. Arrester gear was something I had sometimes come across before when I was flying as a charter pilot operating into and out of military airfields. Our flight instructions were to "trample" slowly over them as the wire was held a few inches



Arrester Gear

Arrester gear with or without rubber discs mounted on the cable and resting on the runway may be trampled only at slow taxi speed.
All Take-Off and Landing must be made between the cables - i.e. not using the length between the runway head and cable. - *extract from Ops Manual.*



Arrester gear winch block mechanism

off the ground by rubber supports.

Our concern was then to ask ourselves how much shorter the runway had now become and whether to take that into account or not when calculating our take-off performance figures. Needless to say my thoughts were that we shouldn't worry too much about it. Sometimes the co-pilot would grumble and frown, but we always seemed to manage alright.

The mechanism in the photo on the previous page was sunk into the grass either side of the runway and would, I think, have crew manning it when the heavy bombers returned for their landing. The idea was to use arrester gear on heavy bombers stations where runways may have been shorter than ideal. The principle is based on that used by the navy on their aircraft carriers. It was to place a steel cable across the runway for a landing bomber to 'catch' as it landed. A small number of airfields in the UK had these, Woodhall Spa being one of them, and an original winch has been removed from the airfield and refurbished.

There was an Allen Williams Turret, this was a machine gun post that rotated in 360 degrees. Quick to install, usually manned by two people. This one at Thorpe Camp was recovered from Elstree in Hertfordshire.

There was a WW2 Jeep on the Camp and on inspection I was told that it was a Ford built Jeep under the licence of Willys. Apparently Ford stamped their name on every single part!

A very interesting visit and much to see. I was impressed again that these attractions are fully supported and run by a very dedicated team of volunteers and their enthusiasm and helpfulness was very apparent.

Rob Giles



Allen Williams Turret


WW2 Jeep

Presentaion by Ian Smith

We were looking forward to a pleasant evening at the Petwood Hotel in Woodhall Spa, once the Officers Mess of wartime 617, 627, 619 and 97 Squadrons.

Drinks, dinner and an "interesting" after dinner speaker were promised by Tony.

The England v Denmark semi-final UEFA footie match was on TV that evening but there were no takers for that. A very wise decision. Tony had found a gem.

After dinner Ian "Smithy" Smith was introduced to us and proceeded to give one of the best illustrated talks it's been our pleasure to hear in many a long year.

He left the RAF after 30 years and spent two years flying with the Blades aerobatic team at Sywell. From there he flew the Jetstream 31 for Eastern Airways and kept his hand in on the Spitfire. A chance encounter with a former RAF colleague saw him back at the RAF flying the Typhoon. He was engaging but almost brutally honest in describing not just his achievements but his mistakes and limitations. It was difficult not to warm to him.

Then he got into the meat of the talk which was involvement in the 2019 Silver Spitfire circumnavigation sponsored by the watchmakers IWC.

The aim was for a small team, with remarkably little support as it turned out, to fly a restored 1944 Mark 9 Spitfire around the world. They did it and we got the story, warts and all. He was an articulate and entertaining speaker - some great pictures too - but with a knowledgeable and sympathetic audience he really opened up and laid bare the difficulties, problems and real dangers with the project. That collision between big money sponsorship, wealthy owners and the solidly competent and experienced people who actually have to make it happen was revealed. And of course the real dangers like long overwater flights in a 75 year old single engine fighter built for fighting not comfort, or safety come to that.

A great evening, and probably the high point of the whole trip.

Rob Giles





His CV is deeply impressive. He joined the RAF aged 17, first flying Chinooks based in Germany followed by active service in Ireland and the Falkland Islands. Later he became an instructor and spent 14 years or so flying Jaguars. He then command of the Battle of Britain Flight for three years.





Day 2-Visit 3 to Lade Bank pumping station in the Fenlands 8 July 2021

As all of you will know The Fenlands are a flat , rich, peaty soil providing an important agricultural growing area of many thousands of acres.

Prior to the 1800s this area grew reeds for thatching and farmers moved between farms by boat. As the need for reeds diminished it was realised that, potentially ,theses soils could grow more profitable crops such as vegetables but to do so required proper management of the water levels since much of the land was actually below sea level and was prone to severe flooding.

On this trip we were fortunate that Tony Fisher managed to negotiate a visit to Lade Bank pumping station which was constructed in early 1800 by one John Rennie. As we approached ,the site was easily identified by its 90 feet tall brick chimney constructed in Italianate style which, in those early days was linked to 6 boilers producing steam to power the pumping engines which controlled the water levels in this area. The chimney is now the only indication of its original history because in 1939 those boilers were replaced by 3 Ruston and Hornsby Diesel engines which after 80 years are still running and are still as important as they were when installed although they are now backed by two electrically powered pumps of modern manufacture.

Such is the importance of managing the water levels on this area of 13000 hectares of fen that consideration is being given to the addition of further electrically driven pumps lest this area could be lost to the sea.

When our bus arrived we were introduced to Ed Johnson who has been chief engineer at this station for four years. In his company we were walked to the main pump house and upon entering we were amazed to see a line of three most magnificent Ruston and Hornsby Diesel engines and a team of three engineers whose job was to oversee the starting and running of these amazing old engines. To put their capabilities in perspective we were told that these diesel pumps can lift 220 tons of water per minute, or put in another way , enough water to fill 6 petrol tankers per minute. With all running they are moving an astonishing 17,000 litres per second.

In contrast the twin electric pumps can move a further 110 tons of water per minute.

The engine starting sequence is a complicated one and requires the three engineers who first have to lower the incoming water level to ' unload ' the engine then after a series of shouted commands a valve is opened to allow a huge tank of compressed air to enter the primed engine pushing the pistons down in sequence and providing compression on the others. Snorting and blowing smoke like a living dragon the engine finally purred into life reaching its maximum speed of 200 rpm whilst developing 295 horse power and only consuming 5 gallons of diesel per hour as it turned its 5 ton flywheel.

It was an astonishing sight. Not the slightest vibration as evidenced by one of our members who placed a coin on edge on the top of the crankcase of this huge water cooled four cylinder engine lying on its side on a magnificent concrete base.

When these are needed it requires 2 engineers to monitor, refill oil reservoirs on the engine and generally top up grease 24 hours per day.

Few engines could warrant their appearance as beautiful- these were the exception and a credit to their designers and we felt very privileged to have witnessed this demonstration. It was our earnest wish that these engines can be preserved in their working state for others to see.

Outside we were shown an eel passage (one of only two in the country) to allow eels to swim upstream without interference from the pumping machinery.

During pumping operations another on site team are busy dragging all the weed and other debris clear of the filter screen on the inlet ends of the pumps and dumping it into trailers for transport elsewhere. This whole operation is a pretty serious exercise where mistakes would be exceptionally costly, not just for this pumping station but for this whole farming area.

After a vote of thanks was given by Mike Cuttell, Tony Fisher reached into a cardboard box and withdrew another box which certainly looked as though he was going to present them with a pizza for lunch but it did in fact turn out to be a rather magnificent wall clock embellished with the FFA a logo as a thank you for this memorable visit.

PJ Cuttell







Main picture: Lancaster Bomber, Just Jane; **Inset:** Just Jane with all four engines running during a highspeed taxi run.

Visit 4 - Lincolnshire heritage aviation centre

Our final visit on our two day vintage tour of Lincolnshire was back to East Kirkby were we had flown into the day before. The coach dropped us off with our luggage at the entrance to the museum where we then walked to a small Nissen hut passing the many trees planted as memorials to those who had died flying in the war. The lovely staff laid on a splendid packed lunch which we were able to enjoy outside in a quiet spot then with perfect timing the sound of a merlin engine being started had us all heading for the front of the large hanger to see Just Jane in all her glory with all four engines running. We all witnessed a high speed taxi run a sight and sound which remains very special when as close to a Lancaster as you are at this museum.

After the Lancaster had shut down we all had a good look around the many exhibits in what can be described as a wonderful tribute to the thousands of airmen who served in Lincolnshire over the years. At the back of the main hanger we were able to witness the rebuilding of the fuselage section of Just Jane which will eventually make her hopefully the third airworthy Lancaster in the world.

We then slowly all made our way back to what was a large grass field and took off into the sun on what had been a fantastic two day event.

Charlie Papworth

Helpful reminders

If you are organising an event…

- Before the day please nominate someone to write up the event.
- Please take pictures with a high resolution/picture quality.
- Please name all people in pictures left to right.
- Please take some portrait pictures that could be used as a front cover image for future newsletters.
- Please send photos as separate files rather than embedded in text
- Please indicate clearly which text and photos go together.
- Please provide any video footage that could be used in the new website.

A big thank you to all members who have contributed to the newsletter. If other members have any stories, pictures or videos please get in contact.

To help us to edit and produce the newsletter in a timely fashion please could the event organisers collect all write-ups including videos and pictures and provide all together within three weeks of the event taking place.

Deadline for articles for the December newsletter 30th October 2021, Please email giles@abrey-farms.co.uk.

Glebe Farm Foods & Hempspan


Rebecca Raynor in a crop of Hemp


Large model of a Sukoi jet

31 FFA Members met at Rebecca Rayner's strip, some by car because of low cloud, though this cleared and it turned out to be a fabulous sunny day.
We drove to Margent Farm in three mini buses at 11 a.m. and after a full briefing by Matthew Belcher, (Founder and CEO of Hemspan), and John Hatton, (his hemp farming partner), we were shown an organic crop of hemp, looked at some buildings made from hemp, had an excellent lunch in the sunshine, before returning to Rebecca's strip to see a demonstration flight of a (large) model of a Sukoi jet. Unfortunately, not to be - engine failure! Rebecca then kindly showed us round Glebe Farm Foods.

Please visit: www.glebefarmfoods.co.uk especially;
Oat Milk: CO-OP (Central England), Booths, Holland & Barrett
Oat Milks and cereals/granolas from: Amazon, independent shops.

The visit came about after I met Matt when he was down in Hampshire in June, raising capital. I thought what an opportunity for a visit by the FFA, being topical with all the plus points of a niche market, environmentally friendly, etc. Hopefully, it might turn out to be a symbiotic relationship between Hemspan and interested FFA Members.
It was a lovely day, thanks to Rebecca and Hempspan.

John Milne



A follow up from Hemspan® by Mathew Belcher, CEO

I'd like to say a big thank you to you all for attending the FFA & Hemspan day at Margent Farm which was for us a huge success. We were delighted to host it in such a wonderful location in a lovely part of the country and introduce the amazing potential of Hemp to such a great group of interested people.

I invite you to visit our website and register for updates as we move forward, just go to the website footer and sign up to our newsletter. **https://hemspan.com**. If you haven't watched the TEDx talk from our Margent Farm co-founder Steve Baron then do take it in; the video is hosted on our home page.

If anyone wants to dig a little deeper into Hemspan® from a "growing homes" perspective or other opportunities then please feel free to reach out to me personally by email. matthew@hemspan.com

Do also reach out to me if you'd like me to connect you with John Hatton our Hemp farming partner.

Best wishes,
Matthew Belcher, CEO











Main picture: FFA aircraft parked up in the distance; **Inset:** Belvoir Castle

Belvoir Castle – A day of STOL, feasting and Old Masters. 21st July 2021

I waited patiently, in absolute silence perched on the wing of the Defender in a landscape surrounded by low cloud. I strained my senses to hear the drone of the first aeroplane to fly into Belvoir Castle the home of the Duke and Duchess of Rutland in Leicestershire.

I gazed to the east, down the 800 metre tree-lined airstrip, I could just make out the silhouette of the village of Woolsthorpe and the hill and wood beyond rising into the cloud. To the west I could see the lower muscular part of Belvoir Castle forcing its way out of the cloud. I was apprehensive and almost resigned to the fact my first hosting of an FFA event may not even happen due to weather conditions…

The tranquility was agonizing, but strangely the stillness had a calming effect on me. Then over the silence, the windsock clattered against the flagpole as the first breeze arrived. My hopes rose with every breath of wind as I saw the previously motionless cloud inching away from the airstrip. I looked overhead and saw the cloud breaking!

Then out of the peacefulness I heard the distant hum of an engine. It got closer and louder and then like magic a red Robin plane scooted out and dashed along the underside of the remaining cloud towards the airstrip for a perfect landing. Out jumps Martin Gosling with excitement and energy and immediately exclaimed, "You need backbone for a day like this!".

Like the awaking of a beehive in the morning, the buzzing of engines slowly became a cacophony above the clouds. With the clouds retreating, a fabulous Tiger Moth landed, and pilot Stuart Beatty got out and thrusted a hand-held radio at me and said, "You'll be needing this".

With no time wasted, I turned the radio on and heard the chatter of pilots giving their locations and arrival times. Quickly there were planes everywhere overhead, on dead side, others downwind and some taxiing to their parking spots - it was a great sight to see everyone arriving safely. I believe I was experiencing the joy that must have been experienced by a squadron leader when his pilots returned home safely from battle.







Above left: Left to right Ed Smiley-Jones, Sue Hawkridge, Bob Pooler. **Middle:** Neville Stops inspecting the Husky. **Right**: Bob Pooler explaining the merits of the Husky aircraft



Inside Belvoir Castle

Suddenly, like music I heard the voice of Neville and the sound of the Chippy flying in - he was giving approach and location information for others. With some relief, I now knew my ground to air radio days were over and I could hand it over to a vastly more experienced coordinator - Neville. I have a huge amount respect for ATC'er who stay so calm and collected when mayhem is about them and also how determined FFA members are to get to an event - it must be for the bacon rolls and cups of tea!

STOL flying at its best!

A Husky bush plane arrived, flown by Bob Pooler the agent for Aviat Aircraft UK. Bob, based at Sleap in Shropshire, is one of the UK's most experienced bush and display pilots. He is here to give us a talk about the virtues of backcountry flying, STOL (Short take-off and Landing) the Husky aircraft and demonstrate the agility of the Husky and why it is so well suited to the terrain and skies of the UK.

A fluent and detailed presentation was given. Bob enlightened us about the heritage of the Husky - when designer Frank Christensen was rejected by Piper when he attempted to buy the rights of the Super Cub. He then bought a Super Cub, dismantled it and built the Husky using CAD - a little wider, longer and with a 180hp engine along with a constant speed propellor. Frank Christensen achieved the impossible of designing, building and getting the FAA to certify the plane in two years - 1985 to '87.

The current Husky is now a class-leading bush plane, capable of a top speed of 145mph, a take-off distance of 290ft and 6 hour endurance (circa 800 miles) and certified for use with instruments. Along with these great credentials, you can install floats, skis and 35 inch Alaskan Bush tyres so it will glide over rocks, tractor tram lines and many other obstacles our land and fields throw at it.

Following this, Bob took to skies which were bright blue and radiating heat. The yellow fuselage and wings of the Husky contrasted beautifully to the backdrop of the skies over Belvoir Castle. He started the demonstration with an extremely short take-off and near rocket like climb, followed by a starboard turn, then a port turn appearing between the trees that lined the airstrip and then a speedy banked approach along the length of the runway and up and away! A tight turn followed this and into another high climb to demonstrate the near motionless ability of the plane. The demonstration continued with horizontal side slips down the runway before a series of impressive swift-like maneuvers before a graceful landing. We had just seen one of the most capable pilots fly an extremely versatile plane - some say, probably the most appropriate plane for farm strip flying in the UK.

A glorious tour.

Following lunch at the Engine Yard, our guide, Anna, was very knowledgeable and had an obvious love for Belvoir Castle. The short tour which we thoroughly enjoyed was unfortunately not enough time to take in the full extent, history and splendour of Belvoir Castle but was fascinating!

Here is a quick overview of some of the key elements that our tour took in on the day. There have been four castles on the site since 1067, the present one dating from 1800 although rebuilt from a disastrous fire in 1816 which destroyed many fine paintings as well as much of the structure. The architecture, interior decor and paintings of the existing Castle rival the best of England's Palaces and stately homes including Windsor Castle, Chatsworth and Blenheim.

Anna explained to us that the First Duke, a Frenchman who was awarded the land after the Norman Conquest, arrived at the edge of the vale overlooking Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire and pronounced to his compatriots - "Belle voir, belle voir!" which roughly translates from French as 'beautiful view'. However, the local Anglo Saxons, still smarting from the death of their beloved King Harold, refused to (or couldn't) accept the pronunciation and so instead called it Beaver. Hence, to this day it is written as Belvoir Castle and pronounced as Beaver Castle - this really confuses the American guests!

Although a scorching day outside, inside the Castle was noticeably cool and calm - a welcome respite for us all. The multitude of windows lit the interior of the Castle showcasing the stunning state rooms, exquisite paintings and priceless artefacts. The apertures revealed tremendous far-reaching vistas across the early Jurassic landscape of the Vale of Belvoir - FFA members cameras were clicking away to capture this memory for the future.

The main entrance halls have an impressive display of Civil War armoury to include; swords, muskets, armour and coat of arms relating to the present Duke's ancestors' military connections.

From here you climbed a vast sweeping staircase leading you to the upper floors and state rooms, ballroom and bedrooms. The



Above: Stuart Beaty's Tiger Moth DH 82a was built in 1935

State Dining Room is outstanding and has the second largest silver "Punch Bowl" in the country, made in 1682 and cost then £616 - no doubt priceless now.

The picture gallery walls are adorned by some of the most magnificent works of art created by the Old Masters of the times to include Gainsborough, Stubbs and Holbein. Included in this collection is the iconic 16th century portrait of Henry VIII by Hans Holbein. Other interesting and humorous points to note in the Castle are, a unique rosewater dish and ewer dating from 1580 that disappears below its plinth into a secure safe each night, along with a quirky passageway, specially enlarged to allow the Prince Regent to get his vast stomach to his bathroom and the presence in the castle of several enormous pieces of glass which even our guide was perplexed as to how they were taken into the upstairs galleries without breaking. Just a few of the Castle's anecdotes - there's so much more to see and tell.

The gardens and landscapes around the Castle have been recently restored to their former glory by the Duke and Duchess. This recent landscaping and vast tree planting projects were inspired by the discovery of the original Capability Brown designs in the family archives. It was well worth taking the time to walk up and down the lengthy paths that criss-cross the gardens.

Conclusion - a summary of the day.

What an event - the Belvoir Castle fly-in managed to ignite all of our emotions, senses, curiosities and appetites.

Over fifteen planes, their respective pilots and passengers attended, plus a few heroic attempts were made to reach us by other members who unfortunately had to turn back due to the poor early weather conditions. We will catch-up with you all at the next event and thanks for your attempts to reach us.

The plane line-up was impressive including two Tiger Moths, a couple of Maules and a Piper Super Cub, some impressive Cessnas and the infamous Chippy! Thank you all for attending and sharing your planes with us - hugely appreciated.

A demonstration by Bob Pooler, an outstanding pilot which has definitely motivated and galvanised me into practicing STOL even more intently. I'm hoping this snapshot into STOL and backcountry planes will lead to future FFA backcountry and STOL events.

Many thanks must go the Belvoir Castle events team led by Anna, who provided a seamless day transitioning from bacon rolls and cups of tea, a ride in the Estate's shooting wagon and delicious lunch at the Engine Yard plus an extremely entertaining and well-scripted tour of the Castle and its grounds.

Most importantly we are very grateful to the Duke and Duchess of Rutland for allowing the FFA to spend a day at their glorious home, situated on the edge of the Vale of Belvoir in Leicestershire with stunning views overlooking Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. A wonderful day!

Ed Smiley-Jones aka Hinterland Pilot
and Warwick Banks

In December's issue there will be a STOL / backcountry article entitled 'Finding my Alaska' a flying adventure around the Outer Hebrides, Orkney and the East Coast of Scotland with four fellow FFA members.
If anyone is interested in joining a backcountry adventure, then please contact me on 07802 322720 or via Instagram @hinterlandpilot. Husky website; https://aviataircraft.co.uk/husky/



Above: Richard Menage arriving with David Cyster in his 1941 DH 82a, Tiger Moth, it was based at RAF Pendeford with EFTS 48 for the duration of the war, training ab initio RAF pilots.



Richard Teverson - Aerobatic Pilot and Aircraft Builder



As a boy, I had always made model aeroplanes, usually from basic materials and plans, as kits were not often available in those days.

I learned to fly in a Tiger Moth at Boxted in 1964 when Wing Commander Hatfield (famous for finding and shadowing Bismark in a Catalina) ran a small flying club alongside his crop spraying company Airspray Ltd..

After getting my licence, along with two others at the club, we looked to buy a Tiger Moth and put a strip down on the farm.

We found a Tiger Moth in Liverpool which had been used in the making of The Blue Max film and it happened to be the same G-AIRK which had belonged to the Boxted Club. We bought it for £600 with a new C of A. When we came to renew the C of A we found a mouse had eaten all the waxed stringing in the lower wings so we had to recover the entire a/c. As one of the partners had been a fitter in the RAF I learned a great deal from him.

Over the years I made several trips to Europe and competed in several aerobatic competitions and held a Display Authorisation for the Tiger Moth. The Tiger was eventually sold in 2005.

In 1975 I decided to build a Skybolt, an American two seat aerobatic biplane with a 180 hp Lycoming and full inverted oil and fuel systems. This was completed in 1982. With a friend who had a single seat Acrosport we flew to many European rallies over the next four years. I was looking for a more economical and suitable a/c for cruising and bought a Piper Tripacer from Blackpool to rebuild and convert into a tail wheel PA20 Pacer. This was finished in 1992.

Two years later I was asked if I would finish off one of the first RV4s which was being built by Ewan English who was tragically killed in a Harvard accident. The RV4 was 90% complete. It first flew in July 1996. The test flying went without a hitch and it was a beautiful aircraft to fly.

In 1993, the Skybolt which I had sold six years earlier, had been sold to a friend in Austria and he asked me to collect the aircraft from Stapleford, refurbish it and deliver it to St. Johann in Tyrol, which I did in the November. A very cold flight at 10.000 ft across mountains.

I had always had a hankering to design my own aircraft but didn't have the ability to do complicated stress analysis. However, I did have two books on aircraft design from the 1930s which belonged to my wife's uncle who was Chief Design Engineer at Marshals. These books I could understand.

There were several things I wanted to change on the Skybolt to make it more suitable to strip flying. The changes were:

1. A better undercarriage more like the Super Cub but more aerodynamically efficient. (All UK Skybolts had suffered u/c failure)
2. Top wings to be separate with a centre section for better visibility and easier fitting of a two place canopy.
3. Stacked seating, with the rear seat 3" higher than the front for better visibility.
4. An M6 wing section with 3" longer chord for lower landing speed and better low speed handling.
5. A better elevator hinge and control system because the Skybolt had very high elevator stick loads.

Above main picture: Skybolt and Aerosport
Inset: Richard Teverson

After two years at the drawing board I started work but the LAA would only accept it as a new design rather than a modified Skybolt and this would require a full professional Stress and Flight Analysis. As luck would have it, someone came to see what I was doing and said he was an Aircraft Stress engineer and that he would like to carry out a full Stress and Flight Analysis on the aircraft as it would be great for his CV and would be a rare opportunity to do a complete aircraft and he didn't want to charge anything for doing it.

When I built the Skybolt I had the steel tube fuselage welded by a professional CAA welder. This time, I wanted to do it myself so I bought a Miller Synchro wave TIG welder and went to evening classes at Colchester Technical College, in order to gain my CAA welding approval.

There was also the need for a 2 place bubble canopy but I was unable to find one off the shelf to fit. I went to see my local plastic factory to ask them for advice. They agreed to let me use their oven, if I made the required tank and former with clamp, to vacuum form the canopy. After a bit of experimentation a suitable canopy was formed with a second one for a friend who was building a Skybolt. The project was completed and the first flight of the Teverson Bisport was on March 3rd 2004. All the changes I had made had worked out well and the only adjustment needed, was a restriction on the travel of the servo trim control. In August 2007 I flew the Bisport to Austria to meet up with my old Skybolt in St. Johann and we had some great flying in the mountains.

In 2008 there was an article in the LAA magazine about the Luciole MC30, a new design by Michel Colomban, designer of the Cricri and MC-100 Ban-bi. Three of his friends built prototypes with three different engines for this revolutionary design. A single seat aircraft with an empty weight of less than 100kg and a cruise speed of 100mph using only 41/2 litres an hour and an endurance of four hours. The three engines were the Briggs & Stratton 620cc V Twin, the Citroen 2 CV and the Honda V Twin. The Briggs & Stratton was the favoured choice as it was lighter than the Citroen and easier to convert than the Honda.

I went to one of Colomban's Rassemblemts to see the prototype fly and was very impressed. A short while later I visited Michel at his home in Paris to collect a set of plans. I was keen to get it built as quickly as possible so that the type could be approved in the UK and other builders could go ahead.

The Luciole is built with a clever combination of spruce, okume ply, carbon fibre and fibreglass reinforcements. The main spar consists of carbon fibre pultrusions top and bottom and birch ply sides, with each wing spar passing through the fuselage with pins going through both overlapped spar ends. Michel told me he had designed the wing with an ultimate load of 17G in case it was built badly and to get enough gluing area on the pultrusions. The wing has klegecell ribs with a wrap around okume ply skin covered with 50gm/sqm fibre glass cloth. The wings are deriggable in 10 minutes single handed. The 23hp Briggs & Stratton uses electronic ignition and has an alternator and self starter. The build was completed in eighteen months and it had completed more than 200 hours in the first two years, including a trip to Bagnoles-de-l'Orne in France at a cost of only £12 per hour.

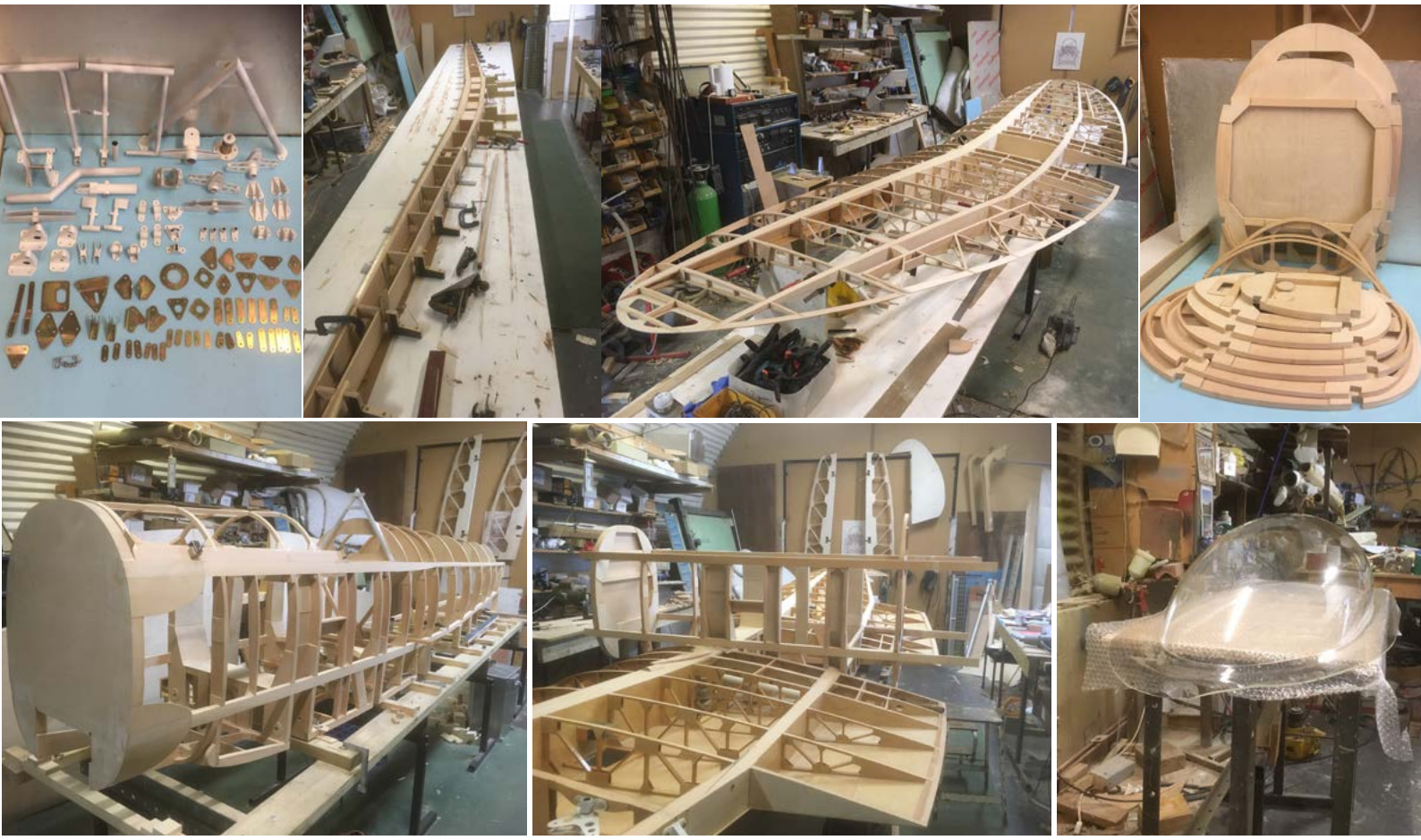
While going to French rallies in the late 1980s I had noticed an attractive two seat aircraft, a Menestrel (French for minstrel) and thought this would make a good next project. It is a two seat semi elliptical low wing, all wood aircraft and suitable for VW converted engines of 70 to 80 hp. There are a few flying in the UK so approval would not be a problem.

Sourcing aircraft quality sitka spruce is becoming very difficult so I took the option of using Douglas Fir for the laminated main spar, just as strong as spruce but a bit heavier. For the rest of the airframe I did manage to find enough spruce. The fuselage and part of the wings and tail plane are birch ply covered control surfaces and the rest is fabric covered. The engine is an American VW Revmaster 2.3 litre giving 80hp. The Menestrel's comfortable economic cruise is 95kts using 14 litres an hour. The build was completed in 2016 after four years work.

Below Left:
Luciole

Below right:
Menestrel





Pictures clockwise from top left: Fittings; Main Spar; Wing; Fuselarge formers; Fuselarge; Front Fuselarge on wing; Canopy.

My most recent project, which made its first flight in May this year is a 6/10 scale Spitfire designed by John Isaacs who worked in the drawing office of Supermarine during the war. His prototype made its first flight in 1975 and although plans were made available soon after, only one other has been completed and that flew in 2015. Seeing this example at the LAA rally fired my enthusiasm to seek out a set of plans. The beautiful elliptical Spitfire wing has never been easy to build. During the war, when they started Spitfire production at Castle Bromwhich, they ran into difficulties and had to send experienced staff from the Southampton factory to sort out wing production problems.

The complete structure is made in spruce with birch ply reinforcements and everything is covered in birch ply except for the ailerons which are fabric covered. During the first year of build I made more than 120 metal fittings. The aileron hinges and control bell cranks are fitted with bronze bushes. The aluminium fuel tank was also welded up with an aluminium tube through it to take a strut to carry the engine torque loads. Also in this first year fuselage formers and all the wing ribs, which are in three parts to allow full depth, spars, tail plane, elevator, ailerons and rudder ribs were completed.

The main spar and wing was the next item to build. Once again the problem of sourcing good quality spruce arose but I did want to keep the weight down and bought two baulks of spruce from an importer. Unfortunately some of it failed to pass the tests for grade A spruce. However, I was tipped off that there was a boatyard on the Isle of Wight which had some good quality spruce they wanted to dispose of, so after extending the drawbar of my trailer I made the journey to collect a 24ft length and had this sawn up and planed into 5/16 x 4" planks for the spar laminations. The main spar jig is set up on a flat level table 23 ft long with blocks fixed to clamp the laminations too. The top web has 7x 5/16 layers at the centre, each getting longer to the tip. The lower web has five layers. After gluing up, the webs are planed to take out the lamination steps and set up on the jig again with spruce blocks between them at the points where spar pins and other attachments will be. When the glue is set, the front face of the spar is planed and sanded perfectly flat, to take the 3/16 birch ply face. After careful shaping the rear ply face is glued on and datum lines drawn on front and rear faces. The rear spar centre section is built in a similar way.

Both front and rear spars must have wing to fuselage bolt holes drilled and the bolt holes that attach the u/c to the main spar and the steel tube frame between front and rear spars. The two spars can then be joined together with the steel tube frame and set up on the table with the datum lines of the two spars level.

The reason the wing of the Spitfire is difficult to build is because:

1. The dihedral only starts 18" out from the centre line.
2. All the wing ribs are a different size and have a different incidence starting at 2 degrees at 18" out to -1/2 a degree at the tips.
3. With ribs being in three parts, each part must have a datum line to match up with the datum line drawn on the spars.
4. The rear spar is in three parts. The two outer parts must be scarfed on at an angle to take the ailerons, still keeping the rib datum line horizontal and level.

When all the ribs have been fitted to the wing and the underside of the wing and the ailerons have been built to match the wing, the underside of the wing can be skinned with 1.5 birch ply. All ply joins being scarfed over a rib or spar.

With the wing now fairly rigid, the front half of the fuselage can be built. The fuselage formers which go each side of the front and rear spars, can be bolted on and the front half of the fuselage built up as far as the rear of the cockpit. This front half is then removed from the wing and placed upside down on its top langerons on a level framework so that the rear half of the langerons can be spliced on and the rest of the fuselage assembled. The bottom and side ply panels are attached and the fuselage can be turned upright for completion of turtle deck and fin.

With all the ply covering on the fuselage complete and engine mount fittings and tail plane fittings on, fitting out of all control cables for rudder, elevator and ailerons can go ahead.

An air break is fitted under the fuselage to reduce float on landing and the front top decking is removable with eight screws to provide access to the fuel tank, brake pedals and the rear of the instrument panel. The under carriage is a Grove Industries spring aluminium gear as opposed to the original drawings which was 20lbs heavier and very time consuming to make.

Below:
Fuselarge onto wing.



I wanted the bubble canopy, which slides back for entry to look as near to the proper Spitfire bubble canopy as possible, so the only answer was to form one myself as I couldn't find anything off the shelf.

I started by building an oven large enough to take the Perspex sheet which must be heated to approximately 175 Deg C to form it. I used three oven elements with thermostats and built in a fan to circulate the air, to get an even temperature. The Perspex was placed over a cut out of the canopy base shape in thick ply and heated till it sagged down about four inches before another sheet of thick ply was clamped with a silicon rubber seal on top. Hot compressed air was fed through a connection in the top sheet. There was a tap on the air supply so that when the desired height of the bubble was reached, I could maintain it at that height until it had cooled enough to retain its shape.

The compressed air was heated by passing through a thirty foot copper coil inside the oven. The Perspex bubble was trimmed and fitted to a steel tube frame which would slide back on two side rails and one central rear rail. Fibre glass fairings were made to cover the sides and blend in with the fuselage shape.

The wings could now be completed with the installing of the aileron hinges, bell cranks, cables and pulleys. The top surface of the spars shaped and sanded to blend in with the contour of the ribs, before the top ply skins are glued on. When gluing skins to a frame it is important that the moisture content of the ply is greater than the frame so that the skins shrink slightly and do not wrinkle in high humidity.

All timber, including the inside of ply skins, is coated with West's epoxy to keep out moisture and preserve the timber. Ply panels are glued on with epoxy glue and stapled through 1mm ply strips to avoid marking the ply and to spread the staple pressure. When dry, all staples and ply strips are removed. Over 10,000 staples were used. All ply surfaces; wing, fuselage, tail plane and rudder are covered in 50gm/sqm glass cloth and epoxy. The glass cloth is applied dry and the epoxy is spread with a credit card, leaving no excess epoxy. When dry it is lightly sanded and a coat of epoxy primer is sprayed on before colour coats.

I chose the colour scheme to be as near John Isaacs prototype as possible. Butyrate silver dope, with RAF roundels on top and below the wing, registration marks on the fuselage sides and red, white and blue flash on the fin. After painting the undercarriage was attached to the wing and the wing set up at the correct angle so the fuselage could be lowered on to it, the wing to fuselage bolts fitted and all flying controls connected.

The electrical system is very basic as there is no engine alternator. A 5.5 A/H Lithium battery is mounted on the fire wall which can be recharged on the ground. There is enough power to start the engine up to twenty times and run the Trig radio.

With everything fitted in the aircraft a weight and balance check was carried out. It was found to be a



Above main picture: Completed 6/10 scale Spitfire.

bit tail heavy so 10lb was added to the nose by using a steel spinner back plate instead of aluminium and a steel propeller crush plate and spinner support. This enabled a 189lb pilot and 15lb of baggage to be carried and remain within the C of G limits. The empty weight of the aircraft is 788lbs which is 11lbs less than the prototype.

After everything on the aircraft and engine had been fully checked out by a licensed engineer, I was able to send off the build paperwork to the LAA and in a few days I had received permission to carry out the test flying programme. The first flight from my strip at Waits Farm was on 12/5/2021. All went well and I am looking forward to completing the test programme. Being aerobatic with a cruise speed of 135 mph and a VNE of 200 mph, it promises to be a fun aircraft to fly.

Richard Teverson
FFA Memeber 124

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Profile: Paul Stephens, FFA Chairman

By Rebecca Rayner

Paul, tell me about your childhood...
I was born in October 1952. My father was in the RAF at the end of the war flying Lancasters. My mother was a tenant farmer's daughter. They bought 310 acres at Moor Farm on the Yorkshire Wolds, where I was born and still live, in 1949 for the princely sum of £17.74 / acre.

I was sent to boarding school when I was only 6, attending Woodleigh School near Malton until I was 12, then to Wycliffe College in Gloucestershire until I was 16. I spent most of my time rowing in 8's for the school team and going off for week-ends with the ATC, gliding and doing air experience flights in Chipmunks.

How about the start of your flying days…
I gained my "wings" in a Slingsby T.31 glider before leaving school, then decided I was going to be an airline pilot as BA were offering scholarships to do the training. I failed at the first medical as I was short sighted!

My flying interest continued in 1969 when my father regained his pilot's licence and he bought a Piper Tripacer. He let me fly it regularly, especially attending the early FFA meetings, when he would fly to the meeting and I would fly it back (no PPL!!). He even taught me instrument flying the RAF way with radio silence! The Tripacer only had an unreliable ADF and basic instruments. We didn't even have headsets. The first FFA meeting I attended with him was the very first FFA meeting at Shobdon in 1974.

Many of us have met Roz, how did you meet…
I met Roz when she only 15 and we married four years later in 1975.

And taking on the family farm…
As per many father / son relationships, we didn't really get on at all business wise, so I decided to leave. Instead, my mother, who was a powerful lady, decided that she would take my father away and live in Gloucestershire and leave me to make my own way on the farm. Trouble is I inherited a legacy of debt and I had to buy them the house in South Cerney. My knees shook the day they left as this bright public school lad suddenly realised that he knew sod all about the book keeping, wages or anything really.

Tell us about getting your PPL…
I did my PPL in 1976 in the Tripacer taking 6 weeks. We had that aeroplane for 27 years until Martin Gosling and William Procter formatted alongside me on an FFA trip to Budapest and they had to drop their flaps to slow down enough. They then sped off. As I am a bit competitive, I thought I must get a 180 hp Robin Regent which would be faster than Martin's 160! Five years later I sold him my Regent which he still has to this day and I bought a Robin President 200i, which I have now had for 20 years.



Paul Stephens, this photo taken in Libya on our flight across the Sahara

How long have you been a member of the Flying Farmers Association?
I became FFA Secretary in 1999 and converted to Chairman 18 months ago. The FFA has taken us to most European countries and Roz and I have organised 5 of those European Tours. We have also flown across the Sahara in Libya, we have been through Morocco to the Western Sahara and the Canaries, did an altiport rating at Courchevel and done 4 flying tours in Australia.

Do you have any other interests other than flying?...
My other interests have been a bit of car rallying in Escorts, a bit of racing in a Lotus 7 and now am the proud owner of an Aston Martin Vanquish S, which is sheer indulgence. We have a finca (farmhouse with land) in Mallorca which we have flown to ourselves about 25 times over the years and up till COVID we have spent most Januarys in the Caribbean for the last 15 years.

A proud farmer, husband and dad too!...
I owe my fortunate life to farming, the FFA and my supporting wife, Roz. We have a lovely daughter, Katie who runs a horse business on the farm. She married James, an Irishman in 2013, who is now a partner in the farm and to top it all, we now have a 5 year old granddaughter – Sophie Lilliana Stephens-Grandy.