FLYING FARMERS ASSOCIATION

August 2022 newsletter no. 140



CHAIRMAN'S RAMBLINGS

In this world of turbulence, volatility and stupidity, it is hard to keep up with the *changes* that are going on! So my ramble in this newsletter is about *change*.

We are all aware of the *changes* in inflation. Figures banded about are of 9% or 10%, yet on the farm we are having to get our heads round 100% inflation on inputs – electric, tractor diesel, heating oil, fertilizer, feed costs etc.. all doubling in price. But our outputs have risen far less than this. I am amazed that bank interest rates have hardly *changed* yet. I remember paying 17% interest in the 1980's when inflation was rapidly rising.

The weather hits yet more extremes, due to climate *change* with varying degrees of blame pinned on our lifestyle and even your cows burping, but always forgetting about the degree of natural climate *change*. We even have *changes* going on in Government with the two contestants slinging mud trying to find favour with the party members.

But what did shock me most was when I topped up with Avgas at our local airfield and saw how much the price had *changed* in just two weeks. This airfield has always been known to be one of the lowest priced in the UK. It had *changed* upwards by 70p/ltr to £2.84/ltr! I actually called the owner and asked if someone had put a wrong digit on the pump, but he assured me it was correct.

To rub this in further, I was talking to Neville, our Events Secretary who said that he has had a *change* of aircraft and is now flying around in a Tecnam doing 115 kts using 18 ltrs an hour. Less than half the consumption of my old fashioned Lycoming. Are the days numbered for these old, noisy, inefficient, lead polluting engines which haven't significantly *changed* for 80 years?

Neville has detected a bit of a downward *change* in the numbers entering for FFA events. Having mentioned rising fuel costs, this could be one reason. Or is it the rising cost of entering events? Or is it the events themselves? Is it COVID? Or is it that one way *change* in our years, with some unfortunately failing their medicals? However, most events are getting fully subscribed at the moment, but we might have to *change* our target numbers down a little.

One thing that doesn't *change* is holding our AGM. I say no *change*, but I'm sure you will be taken aback by our venue this year, hosted by our member His Grace the Duke of Rutland. He has offered us his Banqueting Hall at Belvoir Castle which looks superb – see the Events page on our website.

Paul Stephens

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Joined Since March 2022

8764 J. Barnes from Hexham, Northumberland
8768 R. Murphy from Sarratt, Hertfordshire
8767 J. Fulton from Corby, Northamptonshire
8734 L. V. Adams from Hertford, Hertfordshire
8759 B. Inker from Basingstoke, Hampshire
8761 C. Hamp from Turvey, Bedford
8760 M. Harrison from Malton, North Yorkshire
8754 W. Moore from Marlborough, Wiltshire
8750 A. Small from Halstead, Essex

Departing Members

860 B. Sheane from Republic of Ireland Lapsed
8655 J. Verulam from Hertfordshire Lapsed
859 R. Turner from Devon Lapsed
8614 R. Keene from Gloucestershire Lapsed
663 P. J. Miller from Suffolk Lapsed
655 D. T. Gittins from Shropshire Lapsed
829 P. Clarke from Warwickshire Lapsed
833 J. Hawkins from Dorset Lapsed
310 T M. Storey from West Sussex Lapsed
8565 E. Walker-Munro from Angus Lapsed
42 C. Fergusson Bt from South Ayrshire Lapsed
461 B. Munro from New South Wales Lapsed
8532 M. H. Bichan from Northants Lapsed

Committee Meeting, 28th July 2022

The FFA Committee met by Zoom on 28/07/2022. We did have a face to face meeting organised for the previous week, but 2 couldn't attend, then one tested positive to COVID and harvest came early for the Chairman.

Andrew Cragg gave his membership report which revealed that we now have 406 members. Andrew has done a lot of work trying to stop members paying us money! We have a number of standing orders still coming in from when the subscription was £5.00! Also with most people transferring to direct debit, some have forgotten to cancel their old standing orders. It is only something that can be done by the member – the FFA cannot do it for you. Andrew has tried several times to contact these members, but to no avail.

There are still 87 members that haven't yet transferred onto the GoCardless subscription. If you are one of them, please can you do it asap by contacting acragg@brookerfarm.co.uk

The financial side is ticking over with just a small profit, so no subscription increase is necessary as yet. You must admit that £25.00 is a very low subscription for an Association – even if you just receive the superb newsletter that Giles Abrey is editing.

Neville Stops, our enthusiastic Events Secretary, reports that the meetings have gone well this year, but unfortunately a few members had to cancel due to COVID. Please remember that once the deadline for entering an event is passed, then any deposit or payment cannot be refunded, as by that time caterers and coaches have already been booked and the expense has occurred.

Neville already has a draft programme of events for 2023 with some very interesting meetings in the planning, including an FFA tour in France. He is also hatching a plan to celebrate our 50th anniversary of the FFA. This will be revealed at the AGM this year.

We had some interesting comments from an organiser this year saying that he didn't get on with the Eventbrite booking programme. In fact he didn't like it! We have taken his comments on board, but want to continue with the programme as it helps the Events Secretary enormously and means we can do away with the old fashioned reply slips and paying by cheque. One of the things we have done is to update the Guide for Event Organisers which will be sent to all organisers as a reference booklet so that a good protocol can be followed and things don't get forgotten. This all helps to make the day of the event run smoothly.

David Keene will continue with the Pop-In meetings which have proved popular.

On the airstrip liability insurance subject, more and more are getting their airstrips noted on their farm public liability insurance. The NFU are doing this for no extra charge in most cases and you will be covered to £10 million if someone makes a mess on your strip and pins the blame on you. This applies to purely farm strips and probably won't apply to those that run their strip as a commercial operation.

Paul Stephens

IMPORTANT Membership Matters

1. Change to Direct Debit – GOCardless

Members should be aware that we have moved from standing order to direct debit for payment of the subscription. Since the process started and despite an email and this message in the last newsletter there are still 79 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.uk** or **ring the office** on 01303 874251

2. Next years subscription

Thank you to all those who have moved over to direct debit. 32 members who did sign up to GoCardless last year have failed to cancel their standing orders for a second year running and have paid their subscription twice, again. 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. If you would like a refund for this year, please contact the treasurer. Last year's has already gone in the pot!

We cannot chase you individually so please check that you have cancelled your standing order so that you don't pay twice again.

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 use to announce details of all events. If you are one of these, please get in touch :

- **William Mumford**
- **Colin Suckling**
- **Adam Silvester**
- **Roger Warner**

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 2022

I regret I was unable to attend the last GAP meeting. The CAA set the meeting dates 6 months ahead to accommodate the many organisations attending and then promptly changed this one twice at some short notice, it falling finally on the day of the excellent visit to Bicester to which I was then committed.

Nevertheless, we are circulated with the presentations and there were a few interesting matters which I should like to draw to your attention.

1. Airspace Modernisation Strategy.
There are 7 key elements to this:

- Radio Mandatory Zones in lieu of the current Aerodrome Traffic Zone, regardless of the licensed status of that airfield.
- Surveillance [Transponder] Mandatory Zones (TMZs) to support of Flight Information Services for operations in Class G including GNSS approaches and [Drone] BVLOS integration.
- Enhanced airspace sharing arrangements – turning airspace on and off.
- Deployment of FIS-B (Flight Information Service – Broadcast) & TIS-B (Traffic Information Service – Broadcast).
- Replacement for UK Flight Information Services.
- Flight Plan data – voluntary submission and sharing of the intention of flight.
- Electronic Obstruction Beacons.

Early consultation with the GA community does not seem to have registered any overbearing objections (CAA's comment, not mine) and predictably more detail about all of the elements was requested. Comments included : there's not much in it for us – drones must integrate with the rest of GA and not the other way around – GA must not be increasingly funnelled. He headline seems to be; you can have more airspace provided you have a radio and a transponder. Further engagement with GA is planned. Watch this space.

2. Performance based Regulation
Not to be confused with Performance based navigation, this is the new idea to replace the old Compliance Based Regulation. It is somewhat nuanced but intuitively a positive move.

Rather than looking for total compliance of rules to fulfil the regulatory role PBO encourages regulations to focus on deliverable safety objectives and outcomes which are demonstrated and evidenced. The CAA's own tag line for this is "The **whole** point is the **whole** picture".

This does seem to be another example of the CAA obsessing on how they are going to do things rather that what they are going to do but it does stem from UK Government introduction of Better Regulation Principles, ensuring the regulatory activity is "***targeted, proportionate, and based on a comprehensive understanding of risk***".

3. Update on 4 notable projects in train: (all music to our ears)

- Simplification and rationalisation of licensing and training
- Simplification and rationalisation of maintenance regulations
- Review of pilot medical declarations
- High level comparison of CAA policy against other National aviation authorities

Sadly, only the last is complete. The others have been stalled in the "discovery" phase for the last three meetings at least. In the new CAA project progress speak I trust that "discovery" is not a new name for "long grass"

4. There was a presentation about the work of the British Microlight Aircraft Association (BMAA). I thought you might like to know that they have just shy of 4000 members (FFA 400), 96% of whom are male with an average age of 59.4 yrs old (FFA 65.7). The average age of a new member joining in the last 5 years is 49.

5. Cross Channel Restricted areas
Finally, a non-GAP item. Bristows have submitted an airspace change proposal to establish permanent restricted areas over the channel to accommodate the drone activity currently served by temporary areas up to 1500ft. Whether they are being naughty or just plain incompetent, they failed to include Lydd Airport, where the drones are based, in the stakeholder consultation list! The first draft included a swath of unnecessary land over east Kent covering a number of our members' airfields. This has been withdrawn but the current plans now include parts extending to 2500ft when 1500ft has been established as adequate. Many are unhappy about the conduct of this piece – poor old Boris, it was "one rule for us and another for them" but it seems this adage is more prevalent than we might imagine.

Andrew Cragg

GASCo Safety Evenings

Halfpenny Green, West Midlands; 19:30 - Tuesday 4th October 2022.

Fife Airport, Glenrothes; 19:30 - Wednesday 2nd November 2022.

Henstridge Airfield (EGHS), Somerset; 18:30 - Friday 11th November 2022.

Further details on GASCO website

Subscribe to GASCo Flight Safety Magazine

GASCo Flight Safety Magazine provides an independent view of General Aviation flight safety

An annual subscription by direct debit costs only £16 (for UK addresses) a useful saving compared with buying a subscription a year at a time for £20 p.a.

In the meantime, if you would like to receive a complimentary copy of Flight Safety magazine please contact the GASCo Office by telephone on 01634 200203 or email to: penny@gasco.org.uk

https://www.gasco.org.uk/flight-safety-magazine/subscribe



General Aviation Awareness Council

From the Chairman

This has been a better year, as the world and GA continue to recover from the pandemic, but it has not been without its challenges. We have a very supportive Department for Transport (DfT). However, other Government Departments have not been so helpful and the most recent removal of concessions for Airfields to use 'Red Diesel' will increase costs. Also, post BREXIT, the Treasury has not changed the current unwarranted VAT on Professional Flight Training for which the previous excuse was EU VAT Regulations - despite this not being imposed in Spain and other EU Jurisdictions. The Department for Education has not been co-operative in recognising even one CAA approved Training Organisation on their Register as is necessary before Apprenticeships can be granted. I was able to ask Robert Courts (Minister for Aviation) whether either was in prospect in view of the statements in **Flightpath to the Future.** He was hopeful that the co-operation stressed in the document might prove a way forward but could not address detail in what was a Headline Document. I find it difficult to reconcile the commitment by the DfT to 'help airfields to thrive' when they are penalised by an added Fuel Tax from which Golf Clubs are exempt.

Perhaps the shift to Electric Vehicles and Aircraft will be a positive way forward, but current problems before such a change becomes significant are facing airfields with the availability of UL91 and UL94 fuels and the costs of infrastructure to provide these. The GAAC is seeking to have Government provide some recognition of the costs by reducing Duty and Tax as well as possible contributions towards the cost of additional storage and delivery. TEL remains another problem.

Planning remains our main focus and again we are receiving mixed messages from Government: Baroness Vere offers support for Regional Airports, but Coventry illustrates a different policy with others such as Manston fighting to remain active. We are protected by Clause 106(f) in the NPPF but several future changes are in the pipeline and will be watched carefully. Over the year the GAAC has been in regular contact with the DfT and under the Chairmanship of John Gilder the GA APPG with specific legal input from John Steel QC has set out the correct interpretation of 106(f) to inform those current misinterpretations which have been used to justify several incorrect planning decisions. We are also working closely through our Board Member, Ann Bartaby, with the Airfield Operators Group.

The CAA is facing an expanded role with the GA Unit taking on responsibilities for RPAS and, as a consequence, we have concerns for their ability to cope with the added workload. Old staff with much experience of GA are retiring and the new incumbents do not have the same approach. This leads to long established and approved procedures being unacceptable - for questionable reasons. However, channels of communication such as GAP mean that severe problems can be addressed. As yet to be resolved is the integration of all those using Lower Airspace. Electronic Conspicuity is currently not interoperable and cannot provide collision avoidance which still relies on 'see and be seen', but Drones do not have eyes, so some 'automatic' system needs to be introduced as Air Traffic Control cannot cope with existing traffic at busy times and certainly not when hundreds of drones are introduced into the airspace. ACOG is fully aware of our thoughts.

We are fortunate in having an excellent GAAC Team many of whom also serve on other influential Groups notably their own Associations and the GA APPG. It was due to these connections that a number of GA magazines carried our Advertisement inviting donations and we were grateful for this support. However, in common with others we found that Pilots taking advantage of the work carried out on their behalf frequently fail to recognise the need for cash to continue efforts to protect their various interests.

In closing, I would like to thank our Secretary, Anthony Kedros; Treasurer Roger Wilson and Ian Shepherd for both Publicity and our Website updates along with those Board Members without whose input we could not achieve the results you have seen enumerated in the recently published Government papers.

Charles Henry FRAeS

Financially the GAAC is still struggling to find the funds to continue. The recent advertorial carried by aviation magazines and newsletters, including the FFA, produced almost no donations from individual members. It should be noted, however, that the FFA's annual donation of £750 is one of the most generous, and is much appreciated.

John Gilder (Vice Chair) and his team are actively pursuing the aim of keeping airfields open. It is an ongoing struggle as dealing with local planning authorities (LPAs) is problematic as these are under considerable pressure from all directions, are under-staffed and under-funded. They did succeed in resolving safety issues at Denham in relation to HS2 construction.

There is much work to be done. It remains to be seen how the current turbulence in Government, namely the appointment of a new Prime Minister, will affect GA.

Anthony Kedros
27 July 2022

GASCo

The General Aviation Safety Council

Nothing to report

Rick Holt



MEMBERS MISHAPS

A platform giving members the opportunity to submit any article about their flying career from which other members can benefit and learn from. If anonymity is required that will of course be respected

Pre-Flight Checks

Soon after I gained my PPL, a farmer friend, who had also learned to fly at the same time as me at Ipswich, and I decided to buy an aircraft together. I spent some time during those summer months deciding upon a suitable area of the farm to lay down a strip, and then levelling and preparing it before sowing the grass. For those who know me, I am extremely fussy about my grass and keep it smooth, tidy and well manicured - this was to have a profound effect on the incident in question.

And then we bought a Grumman Traveler AA5 - G-BEZC - together. We were to split everything 50/50 despite the strip being on my farm and me flying about 3 times as frequently as him, which seemed to be rather biased towards me!

Whilst our strip was becoming established, we positioned 'ZC on a neighbours strip from where we both began to consolidate our flying experiences. Then the day arrived when our strip was sufficiently established to receive its first movement. The strip ran from the farm buildings to the local main road and gave us 700 metres of E/W runway. At the western end was a large 80' x 50' open span building used extensively for grain, machinery and stores, with an area in the front marked out for the exclusive parking of 'ZC. On the outside corner of the grain store was a 5000 litre underground fuel storage set-up for Avgas. The ideal privileged set-up it has to be said.

One fine summers day when harvesting was in full swing, we needed the building for grain storage at the back, and so I asked the tractor driver to pull 'ZC out and leave it out of his way on the end of the strip. Normally he would automatically push her back in again at the end of his day, but on this occasion I asked him not to do so since I would go flying in the evening.

I arrived to go flying and began checking the plane over, beginning by dipping the oil on the right hand side of the cowling, and then working my way down the right wing, around the tail plane and up to the rear or the left wing. Satisfied that all was as it should be, I climbed in and started the engine, allowing it sufficient time to warm up and for me to consider where I was going for my short local evening flight. As the breeze was from the east and the plane was parked facing directly down the runway, there was no need for any backtracking or manoeuvring before setting off. Many of you reading this will have already spotted my mistake…

Engine warmed, cockpit checks complete, I opened the throttle and set off. It was not unusual for there to be a few rattles from the airframe of 'ZC, but as I accelerated these sounds seemed more pronounced that usual. However, undeterred I continued down the runway, checking above my head to ensure the canopy was fully locked, as I believed that was where the noise was coming from.

Approaching 40 knots and now half way down the runway, I was starting to think of rotating when a blinding realisation hit me. Yes, you've guessed it, the tow bar was still attached to the nose leg! Throttle closed, gentle braking to a halt, engine shut down, I opened the canopy and looked back down the runway to the barn to see if I had been witnessed - but the farm staff had gone home and I was all on my own. Extremely shame-faced, I climbed out, removed the tow bar and taxied back to the threshold. Right or wrong, I merely put it behind me, turned round, took off (more quietly) and completed my local flight.

It was obvious that in my walk around checks, I had started at the oil filler and finished at the rear of the left wing to climb on board - completely missing the front of the aircraft where the tow bar was. An unforgivable lapse in routine.

It was undoubtedly the result of my being so fussy about my smooth and well cut grass that's enabled the tow bar to slide along the grass - even at 40 knots - without jumping up into the prop which was a mere 6" or so above it. Had it jumped up it would have undoubtedly have required an engine check and possibly an engine strip.

Martin Gosling

P. S. I submitted this story to Pilot magazine some 40 years ago and it was rejected by the editor at the time who said, "I couldn't possibly publish an article that showed such an appalling example of poor airmanship". Whereas I do entirely agree with his sentiments, I was under the impression that the ILAFFT (I Learnt About Flying From That) articles every month were published to show exactly that, from those who were brave enough to bare their soul in public! I've always gone by the adage of 'Learn from the mistakes of others because you will never live long enough to make them all yourself'!

Andark HUET Course

13 years ago, with my wife and two young children, I flew SEP straight to Guernsey via St. Catherine's point IOW. As we approached Guernsey the CTR was closed due to poor weather. We turned towards America and waited for an improvement; eventually clearance was given. A total of around one hour was spent over water at say 10c, ie much longer than we could have survived in it without a dry suit !

Like many, we have continued to cross water with only lifejackets. Meanwhile the cost and availability of professional training and equipment has improved greatly.

This April we went as a family to Andark. It was a lot more fun than expected. Andy (Director of Andark) is a pilot and is very pragmatic about which equipment suits us PPL'S. We did the HUET course along with 5 professional helicopter pilots, coming away with all the kit and the confidence that training gives.

We will be visiting the Scottish isles in late June, hopefully followed by Iceland and beyond, knowing that with the survival equipment and training our life expectancy would be in hours not minutes.

[Typical options: Light weight raft, dry suit, emergency air supply, knife, plb, LED electric flair, compact jacket.] Tried it all out in our outdoor unheated pool at 14c… What a hoot!

Richard Everson, FFA Member



Underwater Escape Training is an essential training for those likely to end up in an emergency situation Underwater – such as Powerboat drivers, helms of performance Sailboats, Pilots of Aeroplanes and Helicopters – and maybe motor vehicles in floods. The technique learned to make a successful underwater escape are the same. Andark's underwater Escape Training course will help give you the knowledge and confidence to deal with the situation and make a successful escape and become a survivor.

For more information visit
https://andark.co.uk/training-courses/underwater-escape-training/

Flying With An iPad

When we all learned to fly everything was on paper charts and ipads didn't exist but today most information for a flight can be found in a single app like skydemon or foreflight.

So we all have an ipad which we take in and out of our planes on a regular basis, the main problem i found was were to fix the ipad safely so as not to be a hazard in flight. I have had various systems in the past RAM being one of them, but then on my last flying trip in the USA I discovered the PIVOT system which has to be one of the best mounting systems on the market.

The Click -Connect system allows easy secure installation and removal from any of the various PIVOT mounts, from suction cup mounts to a leg strap; they even do a RAM mount conversion. You can find it all at flyboys.com.

I have just upgraded to the new mini ipad generation 6 complete with an apple pencil and pivot case, the pencil is handy for making notes on the screen like taxi instructions.

Charlie Papworth, FFA Member









FFA Airstrip Insurance Scheme

Gallagher (previously known as Haywards) Rating Matrix (inclusive of AVN 52G coverage)

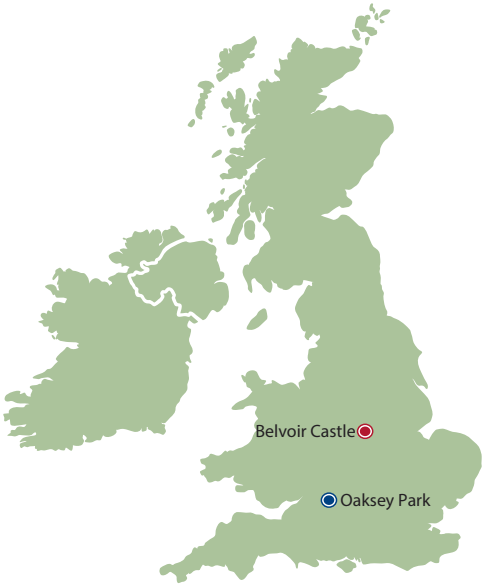
APPLICABLE TO COVERED PARTIES UNDER MASTER POLICY UNIQUE MARKET REFERENCE B0758A224868
SECTION 1 and 3 – PREMISES and PRODUCTS LIABILITY
Amount of Indemnity (any one Accident and in the aggregate in respect of Products Liability)

Annual Movements of Third Party Aircraft	GBP 500,000	GBP 1,000,000	GBP 2,000,000	GBP 5,000,000
Up to 100	GBP 350.00	GBP 500.00	GBP 650.00	GBP 1,100.00
More than 101 up to 250	GBP 400.00	GBP 550.00	GBP 700.00	GBP 1,200.00
More than 251 up to 500	GBP 450.00	GBP 600.00	GBP 750.00	GBP 1,300.00
More than 501 up to 1,000	GBP 600.00	GBP 750.00	GBP 900.00	GBP 1,450.00
More than 1,001 up to 2,000	GBP 700.00	GBP 850.00	GBP 1,000.00	GBP 1,550.00
More than 2,001 to be agreed by Slip Leader	To be agreed by Slip Leader			

SECTION 2 – HANGARKEEPERS LIABILITY
Plus GBP 175.00 for GBP 500,000 any one accident, but limited to GBP 75,000 any one aircraft.
Plus GBP 350.00 for GBP 1,000,000 any one accident, but limited to GBP 75,000 any one aircraft.

If any memebers are interested further details can be obtained by contacting Gallagher directly (0800 612 3635).

Programme 2022



By the time the Newsletter goes to print, all of this years Events will have taken place.

Three were planned in 2019, but due to COVID have not run until this year, the first was the Faccombe Estate then the IOM & Ireland Tour, and the other was Bullets & Beer (this was put together by one of our guests).

Overall the events have been well attended. This is the first whole year that we have run these through "Eventbrite" we have had a few problems, but on the whole the system has worked well. It saves misspelt email addresses, cheques not being signed and events like Pop Ins can be run at short notice. We have updated the "Event Organiser's Guide" which is now in the events folder, this will be sent to all organisers in the future.

This years AGM is being held at Belvoir Castle by kind permission of the Duke of Rutland. Full details are on the website.

We have a programme of events coming together for 2023 and also 2024 (which will be our 50th year), these will be announced at the AGM.

The Committee and I must thank all who have put Events on, in particular those that where originally planned for 2020, then 2021 and that have finally run this year. As we have said in the past, so many events wouldn't happen without members coming forward with ideas.

David Keene will be running more Pop ins throughout the winter, as these come up an email will be sent out.

Neville Stops

Pop-Ins 2022

For all Pop-ins (unless otherwise announced) the intention is to meet at 12.00pm for lunch.

- Wednesday 7th September – **Oaksey Park,** Malmesbury – meet from 11:00 onwards. Limited numbers – 11 aircraft

If any members wish to offer their strips for informal gatherings next year, please do contact David Keene (david@davidkeene.co.uk) or Neville (neville.stops@gmail.com).

Events 2022

- 28th September 2022 – **Belvoir Castle** – landing at grass airstrip within the estate grounds.

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).

AS THESE EVENTS ARE CONFIRMED, THEY WILL BE PUT ON THE WEB SITE. WHEN THEY OPEN FOR BOOKINGS AN EMAIL WILL BE SENT OUT TO ALL DETAILING WHEN YOU CAN THEN BOOK THROUGH EVENTBRITE.

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.

EVENTS – FFA MEMBER HELP NEEDED

- Please NOMINATE someone to write up the event AHEAD of the event
- Please provide in CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER the day/day's events
- Please let us know WHO is writing up which part
- Please take pictures with a HIGH RESOLUTION/PICTURE QUALITY
- Please send ALL pictures as SEPARATE files and not embedded in text
- Please indicate WHICH photos and text go together
- Please provide NAMES (Left to Right) & CAPTIONS for Photos
- Please take some PORTRAIT pictures that could be used as front cover images for future newsletters
- Please provide any video footage that could be used in the new website.

Kirsten and I would both like to thank all FFA members who have contributed to writing up trips, sending in articles, pictures and other useful info for the newsletter. It is your content that enables us to fill each issue so please keep it coming!

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 2022.**
Please email giles@abrey-farms.co.uk.

Eventbrite Eventbrite has worked out well, and we have learnt a great deal over this last year. Two main points have come to light, these are;

Event Information

At this moment in time, we are unable to attach documents to a group email through Eventbrite. For the time being, things like joining instructions and attendee lists will go in on the web site under that Event.

Cancellation Policy

We will have to have a strict Cancellation policy. All events will be going through Eventbrite, and up until the closing date you will be able pull out and get a refund, BUT after the closing date you will be committed for the full cost. This is because coaches need booking, caterers need advising, and hotels rooms numbers need confirming.

This Policy will stand unless there are people on the waiting list or you can find a replacement.

FFA AGM, Belvoir Castle 28th September 2022

The FFA give notice that the AGM will be held at Belvoir Castle, Grantham, Leicestershire NG32 1PE by kind permission of our member His Grace, The Duke of Rutland, on Wednesday 28th September 2022.

The Duke has an airstrip at the Castle, details of which will be sent to those subscribing to the event. Our meeting will be held in the Banqueting Hall. Tea / coffee will be provided on arrival and lunch provided at the appropriate time. Although the FFA usually make this a free day for members, this year we ask a nominal £15.00 per head to go towards the cost of the lunch.

The Duke will be saying a few words and we have two after lunch speakers. The first will be Rob Gratton from the CAA talking about infringements. After which, Giles Abrey will tell us about his solo flight to South Africa.

Approximate timing (apart from the AGM starting at 10:30):

10:00	Arrive before 10:00 for tea or coffee (transport from the airstrip to the castle will be provided).
10:30	The AGM will start promptly
12:30	Lunch
14:00	Rob Gratton – Infringements
15:00	Giles Abrey – My solo flight to South Africa
16:00	Depart

It is the turn of Rebecca Rayner and Giles Abrey to stand down from the committee. Both are willing to stand again.

If you would like to nominate any full member (with their permission) or to nominate yourself (with a proposer) to stand for election as a committee member, then please send an email to Paul Stephens (chix@farmline.com) or by post to Moor Farm, West Heslerton, Malton, N.Yorks YO17 8RU nominating this person no later than 3 days before the date of the AGM. The letter should be signed by both the proposer and the proposed.
If you would like any items placing on the agenda for the AGM, please send to Paul Stephens at the above email or postal address.

Closing date for tickets is 21st September.

Looking forward to seeing you on the day

Paul Stephens, FFA Chairman



Faccombe Estate

Our arrival at Thruxton was mainly by car as the area was covered by murk and low cloud. A couple of aircraft arrived,and once we had consumed bacon baps, we boarded the coach for the meandering few miles to Faccombe Estate. The remainder of the guests joined us at the Jack Russell pub for more refreshments! We were then addressed by Al Brooks,the estates director. A very personable individual with an extensive knowledge of the estate.

The estate consists of around 4250ac including 1250ac of forestry, all of which rises to about 1000ft amsl. There is some tenanted land and some contract work undertaken. This results in approx 3200ac of arable. The land also carries 1400 sheep, although now there is no lambing.

Although the land is very stoney chalkland, the majority of the wheat is destined for milling. OSR, rye, barley and Spelt wheat are also grown.The spelt goes to Doves Farm Foods,they are fairly local, therefore the the estate delivers it themselves. This is used for bread and cereal bars.

The timber is used for wood chip pellet production, which is retailed by the estate. The grain stores are used to dry the chips prior to pelleting.The pellets consist of hard and softwoods mixed together. The Manor House, pub, offices and houses are heated with pellets. The timber is harvested by a contractor, the estate taking their requirements, the contractor the remaining timber ,which may be used for such things as log cabin construction.

The estate also boasts a 500kw wind turbine,which also supplies the village with electricity. The turbine was a surprising planning decision as the estate is in an AONB!

The land is very undulating and many of the farm tracks are quite challenging,we had to hang on tightly to the shoot trailer on several occasions!! Some of the steeper pastures have been set aside for wild flower and bee meadows.

There had been an extensive renewal of the water system. The original one was an amalgamation of five different farms, all of which had leaks! The new system included a new reservoir for additional backup and the flexibility to use potable and non potable water. Interestingly,the new system is eligible for a 30% tax credit. This is because it was a "bespoke system which needed R and D to design the unique system!"

The estate has calculated that it has about 2000tons of carbon credits. This is mainly due to three factors, 1-by having a wind turbine and some solar panels, 2-a system which combines the best combination of wind and solar 3-and grazing the sheep on plenty of stubble turnips!

The estate tour culminated back at the Jack Russell pub for an excellent buffet lunch. You've guessed it ,the estate owns the pub and adjacent shoot accommodation!!

There was a little time to ask Al a few more questions prior to giving him a well deserved vote of thanks.

Stephen Goddard







Alistair Brooks (Estate Manager)

Faccombe Estate Shoot

It was rather apt that our carriage for the Estate Tour was in the covered gun trailer away from the chill Northerly breeze.

The rugged North Hampshire landscape of over 1000ft AMSL with steeply wooded valleys is ideal shooting terrain and must present some very challenging birds to test the very best guns of the day.

Alistair Brooks the Estate manager gave us an interesting insight of how the shoot management integrates with the preservation of the woodland and uncropable areas. Release pens were large, some whole woods which attracted SFP. 120 acres of maize and 70 acres of wild bird cover were grown.

Two staff looked after the shoot, a head keeper and assistant keeper. The birds are all bought in so the keepers have time to carry out vermin control, plant cover crops and plant trees.

42,000 pheasant poults purchased from a breeder in Warwickshire. 18,000 partridge would normally be bought from Spain at €7 per bird, but this year priced between €9 - €11 and Alistair was not happy about not being able to forward plan his 22/23 costings. A season sees an average of 12 birds shot per acre over 4,200 acres.

The season starts with 10 to 15 partridge days before the pheasant are introduced. They plan for 300 to 350 bird days at £62 per pheasant and £58 per partridge all inclusive of VAT.

The birds are all used at local restaurants and pubs with the un-usable being used for dog food.

Even on a chilly late March day the Estate looked pristine and the shoot helped provide the finances to maintain some restored farm buildings used for shoot lunches and other social functions in the summer season.

A thoroughly interesting tour and we were privileged to be shown around one of the premier shoots in the UK.

Peter Gale

Hutchinsons and Produce Packaging

On 20th April we flew into Headcorn, and then on by coach to Hutchinsons depot on an industrial site in Marden.

Hutchinsons are a family firm, founded in 1980, and the grandson of the founder is now the Chairman. As a customer of theirs for many years I was interested to see where our fruit punnets magically appear from when I pick up the phone.

They have two sizeable warehouses that are full of every kind of container, fruit box and ready meal packages that you could imagine, stacked floor to ceiling. I couldn't help wondering what would happen if a forklift driver got a bit over enthusiastic...

Mark Tierney kindly showed us round, and being a food packaging company we had to pay particular attention to hygiene.

Hutchinsons bought Produce Packaging in 1995 to be able to give their customers a one stop shop for all their requirements, agro chemicals and packaging. Over the years they have been very inventive, developing several new variations of packaging, all customer driven. For example they have a new punnet on trial with the little bit of bubble wrap intergrated into the bottom to make it more easily recycled. We passed several thousand strawberry boxes printed with the Union Jack, and noticed one stack looked slightly different to another. Mark explained that different supermarkets require their own specific shades of colour for the flag!

Wherever possible the packaging is made from recycled material, and again being customer driven there is a move away from plastic containers. This is in spite of their plastic products being 100% recyclable, but the customer is always right! Some of their raw materials have shot up in price recently, maybe not as much as Ammonium Nitrate, but close to three figure inflation in some cases. The cost of transport has also gone up, a container pre-pandemic was £2800, now it's £18000! They import from all around the world, pulp from the Czech republic, card from Canada and Ireland, oven ready containers from Israel to name a few. Whist they are mainly importers and distributors and don't 'manufacture' as such, they do have several big machines that fold ready cut card blanks into fruit boxes. Interestingly the wheat based glue they use did come from Ukraine, but have now had to switch to a US supplier.

A recent project is a joint venture with a charity where people in third world countries are paid to collect plastic bottles for recycling. The benefits are three fold, giving an income to people who need it, helping to stop plastic polluting the environment and providing a source of recycled material for the packaging industry.

My overall impression was of a vibrant well run company, a fine example of a family owned business. They employ 450 people over 26 depots, four of them involved in the packaging side. When members of the public go into a supermarket I think few people appreciate the logistics, ingenuity and shear hard work involved to be presented with shelves full of good fresh food.

Tim Franklin



Mark Tierney (Managing Director of Produce Packaging)





Hutchinsons – Agonomy

Oliver Wood gave an interesting insight into the successful Agronomy side of the business and how to achieve the best results, his full presentation will be emailed those who atteneded the visit, if anyone else is interested please email info@ffa.org.uk.

Having retired as an Agronomist in 1999 I thought that Members might like to be reminded what went on in the 70's and 80's in particular. Leading up to the first 10 tonne per hectare crop of Winter Wheat! With the sharp increase in crop values, especially Winter Wheat the Agronomist became a valued member of the team.

Lifelong friendships were made. Trust was paramount. I never talked about cost per can. It was all about 'Gross Margins'

One had to be a step ahead, whether it be managing to control Sterile Brome (I had my own concoction!) OR keeping the crop standing with the huge increase in Nitrogen applications !

Word of mouth got me established----I would ask potential new Customers if I could split a large field in two. Then compare the results of my methods with theirs. Maris Hobbit was the popular variety of Winter Wheat and it responded beautifully to my extra inputs – just over one tonne per hectare on average! Attention to detail being paramount.

Harry Ridley M.B.E. a famous Sheep Farmer used to graze any proud crops of Winter Wheat in the early spring---not only was it extra fodder but also encouraged tillering, reduced spread of disease with a yield bonus!

Being a Pilot helped, farmers love seeing their farms from the Air, and particularly their neighbours if they have slug damage etc, I used to take aerial photographs---Infra red was particularly helpful because it would highlight early spread of disease such as foci of Yellow rust in winter wheat especially in Joss Cambier. Yield losses were huge if not spotted in very early stages.

Also infra red highlighted problems such as couch below the crop canopy. Roundup, being so expensive at the time, could be applied full rate preharvest to the infested areas only!

Various Arable Farmer Groups around the country would ask me to make one or two visits a year which was great fun and very rewarding! I would land at a different airstrip each visit and address their most pressing problems. I probably learnt much more from them !

At the time the Taxman was very happy to pay for my flying, sadly this changed!

I was always aware of the environment/ wildlife, starting off with Hugh Oliver- Bellasis' initiative with The Game Conservancy and his headlands.

Then came the Countryside Conservation/ Woodland Schemes where we put over 100 acres of our land down. This involved planting over 8000 trees, reinstating new hedgerows, planting special leys with wild flowers ,making a pond and providing footpaths for the public to use.

I was very involved in the early days of LEAF which Caroline Drummond M.B.E. expanded to be a huge influence on World Agriculture. Sadly Caroline passed away recently ----she will be sorely missed. I am very proud that four of 'my' Farms became LEAF Demonstration Farms.

More and more legislation crept in which was too much for an old dyslexic so I changed course and ran some delightful shoots and concentrated on letting my buildings. I also helped form The Free Church Of Country Sports with Rod Brammer because Labour wanted to Ban Hunting. We had a Membership of over 18,000 including some big names in the Clergy ! There also happened to be a lobby against killing animals by Kosha or Halal methods. Blair in his wisdom decreed that religious beliefs should not be interfered with. Consequently if you joined The Free Church Of Country Sports you would be free to Hunt etc.

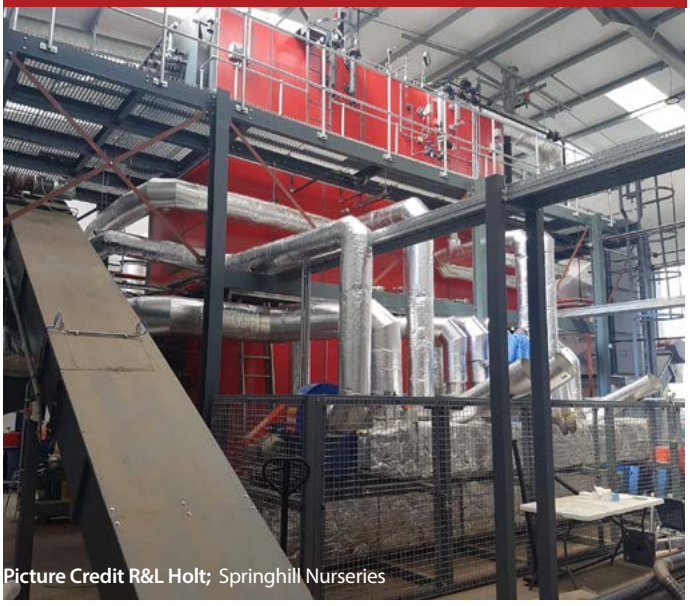
I won a debate at the Labour Party Conference in Brighton to prove the point.

What with Ukraine hopefully the Government will put the emphasis back on food production and forget about planting 37,000 hectares of forestry every year.

John Milne FFA Member 78

Produce Packaging have posted an article about our visit on their website.
https://producepackaging.co.uk/ffa-visit-to-marden/

R & L Holt Ltd



Picture Credit R&L Holt; Springhill Nurseries

Like many others, I had been looking forward to the Flying Farmers' visit to Rick & Laura's tomato growing business for some time. I have known Rick & Laura for a number of years and whenever I met them, they always seemed to have a new project on the drawing board, usually involving another 10 acres of glass or more! Clearly, they were developing a very considerable family business, albeit in their own, very quiet and modest way. Twenty-two aircraft flew in with fifty-seven members for what promised to be an excellent day.

The business was started in 1979 with the purchase of a typical market gardening site of that time, (Sandylands) with small glasshouses and outdoor field crops. The business was subsequently grown by the replacement and very significant expansion of the old glass with new, more modern glass, and then the purchase of two additional sites, Hornsfield and Springhill, bringing the area of production under glass up to 22 acres. During this expansion Rick and Laura's son and daughter, Roly and Fliss joined the family business. In 2013 the glass on the home site was again updated with a glasshouse suited for all year-round production, and in 2019 the management of a fourth site, La Serra, another 20 acres of glass, was incorporated into the business, now the largest independent growers of tomatoes on the vine in the country. All their produce is packed and marketed by Evesham Vale Growers.

Springhill Nursery

The first site we visited was the Springhill Nursery. Our initial impression of this site was one that was common to all the sites visited. It looked very modern, clean and efficient. The crop is grown using the 'Nutrient Film Hanging Gutter' method of tomato production whereby the tomato plants are grown, not in soil, but in plastic film, contained within a gutter mounted at hip height, through which the aqueous nutrient solution is constantly pumped. This method of production has numerous advantages, including ease of harvesting the lower growing part of the crop and simplifying the task of the end of season clean down. Rick and Laura have constantly developed this production method including patenting various aspects of its design and operation.

The crop grown across all the sites are tomatoes on the vine. The cropping cycle on this site begins with the new crop planted in January, then harvested from March to December. Staff teams manage the crop, training the plants to grow up the supporting twine, de-leafing, pruning each truss as well as harvesting the crop, which is carried out using hydraulically raised platforms that run along the heating pipes running between the crop rows. Bumble bees are imported onto the site to pollinate the crop.

Of great interest to all in our group was the energy and carbon dioxide management of the glasshouses. The growing crop, apart from its nutritional needs, obviously requires light and heat for growth, while increasing the level of carbon dioxide increases growth rates. An adjacent anaerobic digester, run by Vale Green Energy, produces up to 2,500 cubic meters of gas an hour, a mixture of methane and carbon dioxide, mainly from maize and grass silage. The gases are separated, with half of the methane cleaned, processed and fed into the gas grid and the rest is used to power a Jenbacher gas engine and generator to produce electricity for export to the electricity grid. Some of the carbon dioxide produced is compressed and sold, while the remainder is fed into the glasshouse, raising the concentration from a background level of around 450ppm up to 800 ppm.

In 2017, alongside the AD plant, the Holts invested in a biomass Combined Heat and Power (CHP) plant using wood chip as fuel. High pressure steam from the boiler is used both to power a 150KWh electrical generator which meets all the electrical load needs of the glasshouse, and the remaining 2MW of energy heats a large store of water which then in turn is used to heat the glasshouse.

La Serra

The second site that we visited was the new site managed by the Holts, La Serra. This is on the site of a large solar farm and another AD plant. Unfortunately, this site was infected with the virus Brown Rugose, a member of the Tomato Mosaic Virus family, meaning that the plant has had to temporarily cease crop production. This virus first appeared in Israel and has now spread throughout Europe to the extent that half of the crops in Holland are now infected. There is no known control measure. The entire glasshouse and all working surfaces have to be cleaned down with a strong bleach solution, before production can be recommenced. The seed companies are striving to breed resistant varieties.



Picture Credit R&L Holt; La Serra

The scale of this site was very impressive. We looked at the three large Jenbacher gas engine generators that would be used to heat and light the glasshouse, with any surplus power being exported to the grid when the price received for the power was advantageous. We looked at the computer-controlled machinery used to dose the circulating nutrient solution, the storage tanks for which were under the building. The twenty-acre glasshouse itself was truly quite a sight!

Rick, Laura, Roly and Fliss have built up a remarkable family business that combines so many different strands that are woven together to a very impressive, cohesive whole. Indeed, Rick explained that the production of tomatoes without the use of home-produced gas and electricity from the AD plants and the biomass boilers would, at today's gas and electricity prices, be totally uneconomic. It was a real privilege to be shown just a small part of their business.

Our coach delivered us next to a golf club, again owned by Evesham Vale Growers, for an excellent lunch before our afternoon visit.

David Keene



Picture Credit R&L Holt; Sustainability



Picture Credit R&L Holt; An NFT Hanging Gutter enables the tomato plants to grow vertically in a high wire crop.

Hayloft Plants – Rare, Unusual and exciting



After an excellent lunch at the local golf club the party took the Coach to the Hayloft Plants main site in Pensham near Pershore College where we were given a tour by director Derek Jarman, an enthusiastic, entertaining and irrepressible host. Hayloft Plants was founded on an old oak kitchen table at the Hayloft in Wick, Pershore back in 1993 by Derek's wife, Yvonne Walker, who still works in the business today. Derek was assisted by the operations manager Lukasz Laszkiewicz.

Hayloft offers an exciting range of plants to gardeners and plant lovers across the UK. The business now has a turnover of some £12.5m of which business to business sales represent about £2.5m, whilst the balance is retail. In fact they have a total 800,000 online customers who make 600,000 orders every year. The average order is £40 and they receive 32,000 cheques annually with an average value of £32. The fact that they still have so many cheques reflects the nature of many of their customers – mature, discerning but flexible and above all, loyal who love to receive the regular glossy brochures that drop on the mat. That doesn't mean they neglect modern channels. Mail order is driven by high profile and targeted marketing and promotional activities on Social Media such as Facebook and Instagram, as well as in the national press.



Derek Jarman on the left and the operations manager Lukasz Laszkiewicz

One of the more surprising facts about the business is that it actually grows very little itself buying in much of the stock from 3rd party suppliers. Being fresh plants this poses particular logistical challenges to the supply chain which includes stock from Holland and Belgium accounting for about 30%. Has Brexit had an impact? Of course it has.

Import costs both in transport and clearance have increased dramatically and it costs the same to send a consignment of 200 plants as 200000 plants so orders have become bigger, less "hand-to-mouth" and involve more on-site storage of the 2000 plants lines that they sell including 2 computer controlled cold stores for holding dormant plants. In addition, exports to the EU, which were always







relatively small, have dried up due to the new phytosanitary regulations, which have eroded profitability on exports to the point where they are not viable. And Labour?

It employs 65 full time staff and has about 45 seasonal workers, most of which are long term workers from Eastern Europe, some 30 of whom live on site and many of these in modular accommodation re-tasked after the Stratford Olympics. Continued availability of foreign labour is an ongoing concern and cannot be taken for granted.

What about Covid-19? Whilst garden centres were closed during the lockdowns, Hayloft was able to continue supplying direct to customers. It had already planned for EU exit, involving new warehousing following the investment from a £200k business development grant from the RPA which just happened to come on stream as the pandemic took hold in March 2020. Serendipitous in part but 3 years growth in 8 weeks required a great deal of planning and hard work and as a result the turnover of the business increased significantly throughout lockdown.

So, how does it work? Orders received in the week are collated on Friday, picked on Saturday and packed on Sunday through to the following Thursday.

We saw the packing team at work placing the live plants in tiny plugs into plastic module boxes, put them into a cardboard outer finally apply the pre-printed consignment label before packing lines with automatic box sealers/pallet wrappers.

All plants are in peat reduced compost (in line with DEFRA's aim to eliminate peat within horticulture by 2030) and the packaging for the plants is all made from recycled materials. Add to that an 87KW ground source heat pump (of which 50KW is going to the greenhouse, with the balance to offices), 4 x 50KW Solar panel systems, six electric vehicle charging points and a further 26 KW air source heat-pumps in planning, their environmental credentials are impressive.

Last word to Mrs Cragg who being an existing customer of Hayloft was particularly excited to be able to visit. I said "Why are you so keen?" and she said "They're a really good company, with excellent marketing and good quality plants. What's really good is they offer different examples of the same plants as a contrast." She not being one to give praise lightly, I thought they must be ok.

Through a mutual college friend and local nurseryman we had dinner with owners Derek and his wife the night before at a very fine eatery on the banks of the Avon. The missus and Mr Jarman eyed each other up and with a glimmer of recognition she says "Weren't we at college together at Nottingham in 1980?" And then he turns to me and says : "I worked for your Dad on Romney Marsh on the Vining pea harvest as a student for a couple of years" Well, that was that….. Small world eh?

...And, a Hayloft Plants parcel was in the porch when we got back!

Andrew Cragg



Collection for Ukraine war appeal

Thanks to Rick, Derek and all FFA Members at the Tomato & Hayloft day for helping the charities supporting the refugees and people distressed by the War in Ukraine.

With the sale of lapel badges for the Ukraine war plus both donations and Gift Aid we raised **£122.00**.

Roger Bell



Silverstone



Being a bit of a motor racing enthusiast myself and lucky enough to have done a few laps round the Silverstone circuit in an Aston Martin and Ferrari on 'Experience' days, I had been looking forward to this FFA event since Warwick Banks announced that he could organise the day for us.

My first visits to Silverstone were in the late 1950's when this young lad in short trousers went with his father to see the likes of Stirling Moss, Mike Hawthorn and Jack Brabham driving front engine cars, drifting round Woodcote bend on skinny tyres, as we stood on top of the pits. The drivers were very visible and recognisable in their open cockpits, elbows out trying to keep control of the car. The track still had straw bales defining the corners which only added to the horrific crashes when a car would roll over, catching fire. Maybe a blessing that



Flying Farmers outside Silverstone HQ

there were no seat belts as the drivers would get flung out and sometimes survive.

I also remember seeing Nigel Mansel win in 1987 when the crowd invaded the track on his running down lap and he struggled to get back to the pits as he was mobbed.

In contrast, the last time Roz and I went, was in 2020 when Lewis Hamilton won the Grand Prix. By this time, you were not allowed anywhere near the pits without a very special pass let alone on top of the pits where we used to watch the cars coming in and out for their pit stops. You cannot see the drivers at all nowadays in their cars, only being identifiable by the colour of their helmet and the colour scheme of their cars as they (the cars) all look much alike. The track has changed dramatically as well since those days in the 50's when it was no more than a disused airfield. Now the circuit has been redesigned, there are good run off areas, huge fencing to keep the crowd out and stop flying debris hitting people and safety is paramount. None the less, it is a huge spectacle on a Formula One race day.

We left Moor Farm in North Yorkshire just after 8:00 am in good flying weather and landed at Turweston an hour later. What a contrast to driving down the M1 which I did the week before when we were stop, start with congestion as we approached every junction despite the four lanes. I used to reckon that flying was one third of driving time, but now it is more like a quarter of driving time and so much more relaxing.

The FFA attendees were coming in, nicely spaced out and I must say that the radio work was brief and to the point and everyone gave a good show of airmanship to the man on the radio in the Turweston tower.

The bus took about 30 of us the few miles to the Silverstone circuit where we were met by a few more members who had arrived by car - the weather in the south was not as kind as that elsewhere.

The first thing that struck me as we approached the circuit was the amount of development that had gone on recently. Not just within the circuit, but all the new industrial buildings on the approach. This place is now huge with massive car parks and high security.

We met at the Silverstone Interactive Museum, opened in 2019. This modernised second world war RAF hangar has been converted into a 4000 square meter visitor attraction at a cost of £20 million. You enter the display through a tunnel with a wrap around film show giving the impression that you are walking the grid as you travel back in time with cars and motorcycles having their finishing touches carried out by the mechanics as they wait for the lights out and the start of the race.

When the lights do go out, you enter the museum itself with not only cars, motorcycles and artefacts from all eras being displayed but also a history of the circuit with explanations about the names given to all the corners. Names like Abbey refer to the 12th century Luffield Abbey priory which was on the site. Stowe refers to the well known private school 2 miles away. Copse refers to the rolling woodland in which the circuit is set.

We then moved onto the history of RAF Silverstone which was a Bomber Command Training base, operating Wellingtons. Hence the name Wellington straight at the circuit. There are numerous interactive devices where you can practice shooting down barrage balloons or go on a Link Trainer or lots of other things to tinker with.

Moving onto the car collection, on display were not only Formula One cars from different eras that have won at Silverstone, but sports cars, salon cars and motorbikes including 3 of Barry Sheene's motorbikes.

We spent about 2 hours in the museum and then as we exited, we went into a special effects cinema where you were sat as though you are behind the wheel of a racing car going round the circuit. As you go round all sorts of things are happening around you relating to incidents over different eras with cars crashing, overtaking you, catching fire, all depicting a history of dramatic moments at the circuit. At the same time, Martin





Above; Exhibits at the museum.

Brundle and Murray Walker are doing a running commentary.

As the Museum is just near Luffield corner, we had a few moments to walk up the bank to view some sports cars practising on the circuit. There was also a 1950's V16 BRM going round which with 600 hp was extremely powerful for its day. It was very raucous but sounded as though there were maybe only 14 cylinders firing unless that was how it was meant to sound.

The British Racing Drivers Club (BRDC) is a very exclusive invitation only club where members must have achieved success in the upper levels of motor sport. It is our good fortune that our organiser of the day, Warwick Banks is a member, and we were invited to have a light lunch in the club house at Woodcote Corner. The BRDC are the owners and operators of Silverstone Circuit. Our speaker after lunch was Chris Alford – a BRDC member and successful racing driver from 1975 to 1991 in sports cars. He was also an instructor at the Silverstone Racing School.

But first the BRDC Chairman, John Grant gave us a resume of past and future developments at Silverstone. Only a few years ago they were nearly bankrupt and they nearly lost Silverstone as the home of the British Grand Prix. However, they have got things pulled round and thankfully, in my opinion, the best Grand Prix venue in the world secured a 17 year contract in 2009 to host the British Grand Prix. They have invested heavily with new pits, a redesigned circuit, improved access roads to ease congestion for spectators and just recently they have completed the museum and a hotel on the circuit. They are also building 60 exclusive lodges on an old car park on the edge of the circuit, of which 24 are already sold for around a million pound a piece prior to being built.

He surprised a lot of us when he said that tickets for the 2022 F1 Grand Prix held in July, were sold out in February and they have 10,000 on a wait list. Although restricted by traffic, 315,000 tickets were sold last year over the three days of the event with thousands more actually on the circuit, from competitors and the teams down to marshals and ice cream sellers.

Next, our guide for the day, Chris Alford spoke to us. He explained how come this old airfield was chosen as a site for motor racing and told us that the first ever Formula One Grand Prix in the world was held at Silverstone in 1950. He recalled many memories of the great racing drivers to have competed at Silverstone and how he spotted young talent when he was a racing driving instructor. He went through the Gold Star board which lists a few drivers from each year who are given this distinctive honour. He finished by recollecting about his father who was a racing enthusiast and RAF pilot during the war with many tales including how he flew Monty's double around.

The day was rounded off by Chris giving us a running commentary as we drove round the perimeter track of the actual circuit in the bus, where we could see for ourselves the massive investment that has been made and is still going on at our home Grand Prix circuit

A huge thank you to Warwick Banks for inviting us to Silverstone and long may the BRDC continue to make Silverstone the best motor racing venue in the world.

Paul Stephens







Above left; Exhibits at the museum, **Above middle;** replica 1948 ERA Grand Prix car with Charlie Papworth at the wheel, **Above right;** Martin Gosling left and Chris Alford



Flight to Silverstone

Tuesday 10th of May, a Flying Farmers day out at Silverstone. What could possibly go wrong? Well the weather forecast the day before looked fairly iffy, so I had warned my non-flying guest, Tony, that we may have to have lunch in a Devon pub. The following morning the situation was no better with Turweston at about 700-800 feet and weather en route anything between 1000 and 1500 feet. In other words, a fairly normal FFA day. I consulted on the phone with Neville who was at Turweston, and it did feel it was improving slowly, though I was aware the coach was leaving Turweston at 10.00 am prompt. So I told Tony we'd go up and see how the weather was, if we didn't like it we'd come back to Exeter. The route from Exeter is fairly low, past Salisbury plain to Westcott, then turn left to Turweston.

So off we set and got to about 1500 feet with reasonable visibility ahead. There was a curtain of cloud a few miles off to our right and parallel to our route. It stayed there the whole way to Swindon, when we saw the cloud and rain ahead down to the deck. So a quick call to Brize and they gave us clearance through the Zone at 1000 ft skirting around Oxford, keeping an eye on us the whole way. Then straight into Turweston's circuit, touching down at 10.00 am. Just in time to meet a posse of Flying Farmers queuing to board the coach.

We soon got to Silverstone to be met by the manager of the new Interactive Museum who welcomed us with coffee and a talk about the Museum. It had opened in 2020 for a week, just before the first pandemic lockdown. Our visit was in the first week of its second opening. I was a bit mystified when he advised that anyone susceptible to motion sickness should sit in the back row of the cinema seats for the interactive experience, but ignored the advice.

I'm a long time motor racing fan so the Museum was a delight, both for the contents and the presentation. The history of motorsport at Silverstone from its origins as a wartime RAF training base to the current pre-eminent F1 circuit was clearly laid out, with old photos, graphics and pictorial timelines. Set inside this wrapper were racing cars and bikes from every class of racing and every period. Context is the key to history, though you wouldn't think it from seeing my childrens' school curricula. So I spent a very enjoyable time going back down memory lane. But I'd forgotten the advice about the interactive part of the museum. It turned out to be a smallish cinema so Tony and I sat down in the front row. Big mistake when what appeared to be an insanely realistic Imax projection of a race around the circuit began. I ended up with my eyes closed and stomach lurching. Then hearing a racing engine at full tilt, and needing some fresh air, I wandered out the back of the museum to a stand overlooking the track. It belonged to a V16 BRM, running for the first time in over 50 years and the driver seemed to be enjoying himself.



Shortly after, back in the coach to the holy of holies, The British Racing Drivers Club, for lunch. The BRDC owns and operates the Silverstone Estate and is famously exclusive – there are only 850 members. It's a fascinating building on two floors with a roof terrace on top. All the while, we were serenaded by a bunch of Porsche Cup racers practising and giving us that banshee flat six wail. We were welcomed by the chairman John Grant, introduced by Warwick Banks. John gave us a tour d'horizon of the history of the BDRC and its current plans to develop the Estate, including a new hotel well under way. He then passed the baton to Chris Alford, himself a successful racing driver and instructor at the Silverstone Racing School. Chris enthralled with his tales of racing events and personalities, took us through the Honours Board stuffed full of household names, and explained the origins of the many paintings and memorabilia. He gave special mention to the 3000+ miniature cars in display cases around the walls of the main room. I had thought it was a stunning collection of Dinky or Corgi cars, but no. Each one was hand crafted and painted. Chris also told us of his father's service flying through the war and on to the Berlin Airlift. He produced a battered old briefcase containing his father's logbooks, pilot's notes of various aircraft and other personal items. A great way of reminding us of Silverstone's origins as a wartime RAF training airfield.

Chris then returned with us to the coach to give us a guided tour of the circuit, pointing out all the development and construction work being undertaken. It certainly seems the venue for the British Grand Prix is in safe hands.

Meanwhile the weather had been improving all day to broken sunshine and a very good cloudbase. So back home at a leisurely height and with great visibility to round off a memorable day. I was even able to convince another credulous passenger that the stall warning light on the dash was actually the pilot's beer warning light and he had twenty minutes from touchdown to getting me into a pub.

Jon Hanna

FFA European Tour 2022 - Isle of Man & Ireland

Day 1: DEFA HQ, Department of Environment, Food & Agriculture





At our welcome dinner in the Mannin Hotel in Douglas we were delighted to have as our guests, Clare Barber, Minister of Agriculture and her husband Chris, Howard Quaile, former first minister and currently Minister for Enterprise, Lawrence Skelly, President of Tynwald and Alan Parsons, MNFU President. Claire Barber was then our host the next day at DEFA headquarters in St John's. This modern environmentally friendly building was set in a pleasant area of woodland 8½ miles up the A1 from Douglas.

The minister served us coffee while we waited for a briefing by DEFA officials. She had explained to us the evening before that this is the second administration in which she has served. As a nurse, she had been minister of health in the first administration. Any temptation to think that this is what you expect to find in small island politics and that she was in anyway unsuited to her role was quickly swept away by her knowledge and enthusiasm for the issues surrounding Isle of Man agriculture and the strategies required to address them.

First off was Andy Lees, the director of agricultural lands who gave us an introduction into the role of DEFA. Just to set the scene: the Island is a self-governing British Crown Dependency - as are Jersey and Guernsey in the Channel Islands - with its own parliament, government and laws and its people are British citizens. It is not part of the United Kingdom, nor is it part of the European Union. With the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union a Trade and Cooperation Agreement was concluded by the UK and EU. This Agreement only applies to the Isle of Man so far as it relates to trade in goods and certain fisheries matters. This means that the Isle of Man can generally trade in goods with the EU in the same way as the UK.

There are four main responsibilities embodied in 4 directorates : Agriculture and Lands, Environment, Regulation and, unlike our own DEFRA, Planning and building control.

It's clear that much of the core policy reflects UK principals; there is flat rate area support payment of £64.52 per acre (£160 per ha – yes, they still use acres) which unlike our BPS, will be maintained at this level until further notice. It has many of the features familiar to us such as the "active farmer" test, a minimum of 12.5 acres (5.05ha – could have guessed that?) and a Young Farmers Supplementary Payment. There is also an environment scheme which with its AE501's (winter stubbles) and AE506's (Cover crops) does sound very familiar to our own CSS and indeed shares many of its prescriptions.

Next up was Dr Richard Selman, the Ecosystem policy manager. The island became a UNSECO Biosphere nation on 2016. The Biosphere program was set up in 1971 to protect wilderness areas with no regard to the people who lived in them. In 1995 the program goals were widened to include people, economy, culture and community. There are 727 biospheres in 131 countries. But what does it mean to the island? DEFA is already committed to preserve the rich and beautiful landscape of the island. Biosphere status gives focus; to engage with the community in areas of education, conservation ad sustainable development. It also "locates" the island and encourages businesses to use the Biosphere status to promote the island and its products, including tourism. There is also much to be learned and shared with the global biosphere community.

Lastly, Andy Cooper, the Agricultural policy manager. It cannot be said that the Island has an enviable agricultural infrastructure. The Isle of Man covers 141,440 acres of which 75% are utilised for agriculture with an average field size of 5 acres; 350 farms of which only 250 are properly commercial. Here are some statisitics. All in acres and head :

Grass 64,512, Heathland 24,028, Cereals 6,613, Pulses 447, Potatoes 233, Horticulture 56

Sheep 119,798, Beef 6,842, Dairy 4,232, "Other" cattle 13,740, Loughtans 3,292 & Pigs 1628

(Loughtans are manx sheep – I didn't see whether they had a tail or not)

Milk is protected at 46pence per litre some of which goes to make the Manx cheese. The main agricultural export is beef and lamb; the modern 4-species abattoir provides 80-115 beef carcasses per week for export while lamb is more seasonal but will typically kill 1000 head per week in season. Livestock is officially TB free. The Laxey Mill processes 2000t milling wheat annually.

Other notable exports include Gin, Whisky & Spirits, Cheese, Berries Manx Christmas puddings, salt from the IOM salt company along with a significant quantity of locally caught crab/lobster and scallops. The Island is noted worldwide for the Manx kipper, produced from the summer/autumn herring fishery. How about this? They have no badgers, deer, snakes, squirrels, moles or foxes. One thing they would dearly love to export in great quantities is the wild wallaby. Usually found living in Eastern Australia and Tasmania, they are now thriving in the Isle of Man following an escape from captivity in Curraghs Wildlife Park in the 1960s. As yet, any cunning schemes to add them to the island's agricultural economy is elusive.

Andrew Cragg

Farm Visits: Rhendoo, Guilcagh and Ballavarry


Lhen Trench

In true FFA form, we enjoyed a full itinerary of 3 farm visits on the afternoon of our first full day on the Isle of Man. First we visited Stuart Allanson's arable farm near Jurby. His father, after farming in Yorkshire, moved to the I-O-M in the 1970s, now Stuart who has a son at Harper Adams university, runs a successful business producing, washing, grading and packaging brassicas for the local supermarkets. We were shown the greenhouses, and irrigation equipment. Water is taken from the Lhen trench – a dyke formed in the ice-age which was a melt-water channel. It then silted up and was dug out a couple of hundred years ago in order to drain the curraghs (marshes).

Another fascinating fact was seeing their bog oak they had ploughed up. This tree trunk had been buried in peat, probably for thousands of years from post-ice age woodland as the climate warmed and prevented it from decomposing by the acidic conditions of the peat. We were taken around the fields in 2 tractors and trailers driven by Paul (who organised our farm visits) and Stuart's son. We were also shown the washing, packaging equipment and staff facilities and the farm workshop run by a full time mechanic.

Then we continued in the trailers to the neighbouring farmer, Jo Crellin, at Guilcagh Farm. She has spent her life protecting the natural wildlife, including wild flowers, insects and nesting curlews and also nurturing hedge rows. The wet low lying fields we were shown which were adjacent to the Lhen trench where Jo showed us the lightly grazed permanent pasture. During the tour a very happy Tony Fisher travelled with Jo by quad bike.

After leaving Jo's farm we continued by bus to a new dairy unit at Ballavarry Farm where the boss Kathryn Revitt gave us a talk and walk around the premises. Kathryn a business woman lawyer for former Jack Hemmings' businesses including the nearby Ballaseyr Stud, is passionate about investing in the dairy farm to put back into the Manx economy using local labour. She showed us round the new concrete yards, silage clamps, cow and calf housing.

Rosemary Woodfield


Bog Oak at Rhendoo


Stuart and son Rhendoo Farm


Jo Crellin at Guilcagh Farm


Dairy unit at Ballavarry Farm



We left a blustery and overcast Cregneash Village, crossed over the mountains to be greeted by blue skies at the town of Peel, dominated at the harbour entrance by the impressive Peel Castle.

Everyone was free to do their own thing for this visit, some opted to head for the Castle immediately, others like Paul and myself headed for lunch at a well recommended seafood kiosk, of which there were several dotted along the seafront. Here, a very tasty fresh crab sandwich was had.

Then to the Castle, an impressive red sandstone fortress connected to the town by a causeway. Built on St Patricks Isle by the Vikings in the 11th century, the round tower being part of the Celtic monastery with battlements added later. Although now a ruin it was once home to Kings, Missionaries, Military and Government. Now it's owned by Manx National Heritage and opened to visitors in the summer. As we walked around it our

overwhelming thought was what it would have been like in it's heyday, with its prominent position and unrivalled sea views. For me one of the most dominant memories was the masses of wildflowers growing amongst the ruined walls – pink Thrift abounded everywhere, a spectacle to behold.

Roz Stephens





House of Manannan

We visited the House of Manannan (a mythological Manx sea god) in Peel's old railway station. This informative, enjoyable and very impressive museum offers a fascinating walk through the Isle of Man's 10,000-year history. Life-size reconstructions of a Celtic roundhouse, a Viking longboat and a 19th-century Peel street, among many others, all with sounds and even smells and all with opportunities for interaction, bringing the island's past and people to vivid life.

Clare Golden



Day 3: Or the Day We Nearly Didn't Leave The Isle of Man



Today we were due to leave the Isle of Man for a fairly straightforward flight to Newtownards, Northern Ireland but as often happens in flying the weather had other ideas.

We awoke to low cloud clinging to the hill tops. Locally this is known as the `Cloak of Manannan', a shroud of mist sent by Manannan (a mythical god of the sea) that covers the island protecting it from unwanted visitors, well these visitors just wanted to leave!

Our coach arrived on time to take us to Ronaldsway airport in vain hope if we stared at the sky long enough it would clear, no such luck. The special VFR clearance we needed wasn't coming, the cloud being stubborn, so contingency plans were being explored. Hotel space was at a premium as the TT races were taking place the following week and certainly not available for a group our size.

This is where our coach driver, Alan became our saviour of the day. Despite only being booked to take us to the airport he gave up his Sunday and put his coach at our disposal for as long as necessary.

A plan was formed for Alan to take us to Port Erin where we could take the scenic steam train to Castletown where our trusty driver was there to meet us, unfortunately the only place that could accommodate us for lunch, being a Sunday everyone was either booked up or not open, was Port Erin, so back again to our starting point where we had what was supposed to be sandwiches at short notice. It turned out to be a lovely lunch of our choice at Okell's Station Hotel, a huge thank you to all of their staff for accommodating us.

It was then back on the coach to Castletown to wait to see if a clearance in the weather came. It was if the God of the Sea took pity on us as by 4pm the cloud was lifting, but nothing goes smoothly - we had to wait for the key for the gate to get airside. Nevertheless by 4.30 we were able to get to the aircraft to depart, the sky now being miraculously crystal clear. Manannan looked kindly upon us.

We owe a huge thank you to Mark Langley, our contact at Ronaldsway Airport, but the biggest thank you of the day goes to Alan Lancaster our coach driver who went above and beyond, we cannot thank him enough.

Roz Stephens

Day 4: Titanic Museum, Belfast, N. Ireland



This page photos courtesy of Roz Stephens, top left; Stunning exterior of the Titanic Museum, **top right;** Example of a First Class cabin aboard Titanic **inset;** Gates from the Harland & Wolff shipyard in the museum, **below;** Briefing from a guide at The Titanic Museum.

Opened in 2012, a monument to Belfast's maritime heritage on the site of the former Harland & Wolff shipyard where the Titanic was built. I'm sure everyone knows of the Titanic and it's demise but perhaps not it's importance to the city of Belfast.

All this and more is very sympathetically and skilfully portrayed over nine galleries which explore the sounds, smells and stories of RMS Titanic.

The Titanic was built for the White Star Line to compete with the great ocean going liners Lusitania & Mauretania owned by the rival Cunard line. The Lusitania was renowned for her luxury, whilst the Mauretania held the The Blue Riband (the unofficial record for the fastest crossing of the Atlantic, a record which remained unbroken until 1929).

White Star had decided not to attempt to compete on speed but rather build larger more reliable and more luxurious ships than their rivals.



In 1907 Lord Pirrie (partner) and Bruce Ismay (chairman) decided to build three ships Olympic, Titanic and the Britannic. The Olympic being launched in 1911, the Titanic 1912 and the Britannic the largest of them all in 1914.

The Harland & Wolff shipyard in Belfast was at that time the biggest ship building consortium in the world. It's importance to Belfast cannot be over stressed as the Titanic was the largest man made object of its day. It's construction took thousands of men a little over two years to complete.

The world was changing rapidly in the late 19th century. After the great famine that ravaged Ireland in the 1840's people flooded into Belfast to find work in the new linen mills, the docks, the shipyards, and a range of successful and interconnected industries that employed large workforce's such as the Belfast Ropeworks Company, the largest in the world employing over 2000 people. It's buildings covering some 40 acres The textile engineering company Mackies employed over 6000 workers and covered 133 acres.

The self guided tour took in all these industries and demonstrated how they all integrated into the building and launching of the great ship.

It walked you through the inception, building, launching and finally her sinking on the night of April 15th 1912.

There were many harrowing personal stories depicting the loss of loved ones, none more so than the story of the relatives of Peter Farrigton's wife Patricia (nee Hickman) who were tragically lost on that fateful night. Patricia very kindly sent me the following story.

Gordon Bellerby

The Hickman brothers were from a large farming family who lived in the small village of Fritham near Lyndhurst in the New Forest.

Leonard (24) had emigrated to Canada to seek his fortune. He was so delighted with the country that he returned home in 1912 to try to persuade his brothers to accompany him back to Canada. Lewis (32) and Stanley (21) decided to go with him.

Lewis's wife Marie was to Join them at a later date as she was a dressmaker to the Queen and was busy at the time. The brothers planned to sail from Liverpool, but due to a coal strike (coal was diverted from other ships to the Titanic due to its importance and it being it's maiden voyage) they were upgraded to 2nd class passengers on the Titanic sailing from Southampton. There were four others from the area who decided to go with them.

Tragically all were lost in the sinking. A body was found and identified as Leonard, and in his overcoat pocket was a membership Card of the Independent Order of Foresters in Eden, Manitoba where Leonard worked. A funeral for Leonard was arranged at Neepawa and many fellow workers and friends travelled from Eden as he was very highly thought of in the area.

His employer, plus a family friend who had emigrated earlier, and the vicar decided to open the coffin to identify the body. To their distress they discovered the body was not Leonard, but Lewis, who had apparently been wearing Leonard's overcoat. As so many people were already assembled in the church it was decided to seal the coffin, say nothing and continue with the service and interment at Neepawa Cemetery as arranged.

A brother at Fritham received letters explaining the situation saying that no one knew what else to do and asking what should be done with Leonard's fur coat, rifles and cornet. When other personal effects were sent to England Marie confirmed that they had in fact belonged to her husband Lewis.

Eventually a tombstone was erected at Neepawa Cemetery in memory of the three brothers. Peter also told me he had discovered a memorial in the centre of Belfast very close to our hotel with all the names of those lost. The three brothers names being on it.

Patricia Farrington (nee Hickman)



The memorial Peter found with his three family members that went down on the Titanic



Since this report was written it is with great sadness that we have learned Peter Farrington passed away whilst at his house in Cornwall. He participated in many overseas tours as a member of Roger Bell's G-HOPE team. His kind words and welcoming smile will be greatly missed by us all.

William Graham's Farm



The incredible circular milking parlour.

It gives the writer great pleasure to write a review on this section of the trip as we (Alf and Gill) have been great friends with our hosts in County Fermanagh, William and Gail Graham, for many years.

We left a bright but breezy Newtownards and headed into the sunshine and green pastures of Northern Ireland, avoiding Belfast City Airport.

We landed at a sunny Enniskillen and had to endure a rather protracted holding and back tracking procedure, but we were kept entertained by Peter Gale missing the correct turning and having to hastily get out and push! This then allowed us to form a rather impressive procession of all the aircraft moving in convoy along the runway to the apron where we were met by an enthusiastic Gail Graham.

The group just had time to drop their bags and grab a quick lunch at The Killyhevlin Hotel, (a glorious location on the banks of Lough Erne) before heading out to the Graham's dairy farm. Some of the group were murmuring 'Not another dairy farm' but as soon as we exited the coach the party could tell that this was not just an ordinary dairy farm.

We were met by an array of impressive grassland machinery and a splendid new dairy building consisting of a 60-stall rotary parlour, a viewing platform and housing for 570. The herd are bred not just for their milk yield of 11500 litres pa, which mainly goes to make Baileys Irish Cream, but for their pedigree sales. It was obvious to all present that this herd receives exceptional management and care which is provided by 3 generations of the Graham family, who received us with such gusto (and ample quantities of beer and wine).

Having been plied with alcohol we were all now ready for an afternoon nap but were awakened from our slumbers by a delightful early evening boat trip around Lough Erne on M V Kestrel.

Gill Oliver



Group photo in one of William Graham's dairy cattle sheds.



Alf Oliver with our farm visit hosts William and Gail Graham

An evening boat trip along Lough Erne from Killyhevlin Hotel



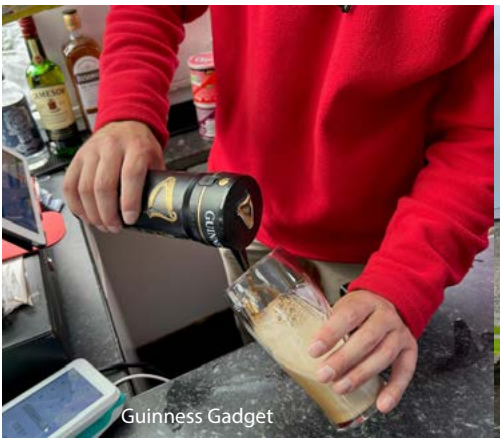
All aboard

After a lovely flight from Newtownards we visited William Graham's very impressive farm. On our return we had a chance to freshen up at the fabulous Killyhevlin Hotel then meet at the hotel jetty ready for a scenic boat tour along Lough Erne. The boat, MV Kestrel was awaiting our group and we were joined by Richard who had arrived earlier with David from the South of England after having a few days of weather that prevented them joining earlier.

The boat had a pretty well stocked bar and there was soon a line of thirsty sailor folk interested in sampling the various liquids on sale. Am and I shared a Guinness between us, it was from a can but they had an interesting gadget called a Nitrosurge that creates a vibration as the can is poured through and gives a perfect head on the pint straight out of the can, very tasty.

Lough Erne provides the area with drinking water through the Killyhevlin Water Treatment Plant. There have been recent large investments to upgrade these works. An 'invasion' of the Zebra Mussel, which is from Asia, has caused huge issues for various reasons including boat and water treatment equipment damage. Eels were introduced to keep back the mussel explosion although now the eels suffer from a parasite contracted by eating the mussels. There was mention of a new boat to which gives hope to the pesky Zebra being reduced in numbers giving the fish more chance to thrive with the resulting increase in food available.

The narrow 2 miles from the hotel is where the "Watergate" Enniskillen Castle is situated, Hugh Maguire who died in 1428 is said to have built it sometime in the 1420's. Some of the group


Guinness Gadget


Watergate Castle


Devenish Island

got to visit it the following day during some free time. The St George flag flies in honour of its two former British regiments and has the royal right to fly all year.

Along the water we saw a couple of boats out fishing and one lucky fellow had caught a pike, other types of fish caught in the area would include eel, bream, salmon, carp, perch. There are many fishing stands where people will setup and compete in early May in the Classic. Anywhere between 200 and 300 compete for a number of prizes up to £5000 for the largest catch.

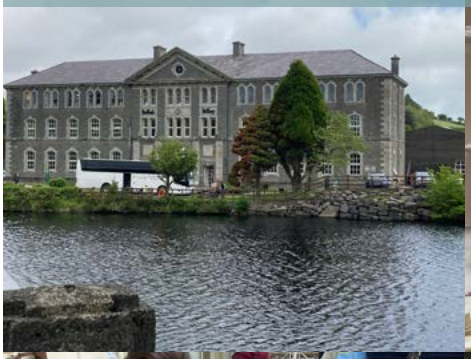
The Lough itself is 65m at its deepest point, and there can be fresh water waves 2m high in the winter months. We wound our way along to Devenish Island (from the Irish meaning Ox Island) which is around 1.2miles by 0.75miles featuring a 30m tall tower and beautiful remains of various buildings. On the island is a Monastery with remains from the 12th 13th and 15th century and it wasn't until 1922 that the Island become uninhabited. Only accessible by water the island was a place of worship and used for burials as well as teaching. There are numerous Crannogs in Lough Erne which are small man-made islands with some dating back to 560AD, a prefect environment for birds such as Lapwing, Curlews, Sky Larks, Hen Harriers, Grebes and banks of overhanging trees along certain areas that house Kingfishers.

Winston Lee



Fellow Sailors left to right; Gordon Bellerby, Caroline Bellerby, Annette Gosling, Martin Gosling, Roger Bell, Rosemary Woodhouse, Andrew Cragg

Belleek Pottery








Belleek Pottery is Ireland's oldest pottery and was created by John Caldwell Bloomfield after inheriting the Castle Caldwell estate from his father.

The estate encompassed the village of Belleek. It was the time around the potato famine and he wanted to find useful employment for them. He himself was interested in geology and had a survey done on his land. It revealed that the necessary raw materials to make pottery were present… feldspar, flint, clay and shale. The local river Erne flowed past an area called Rose Isle and provided the power to drive the mill wheel to grind the raw materials into slip or liquid potters clay…. Belleek was born.

Bloomfield needed power, building materials and transport to set up his Pottery. He lobbied for a railway to be built to Belleek which was necessary to bring in coal as fuel for the kilns and also necessary to move product to market. He found two partners, one with money and the other with interest in ceramics and between themselves Belleek emerged and the building completed on 18th November 1858.

Young apprentices and capable workmen were found locally but augmented by 14 craftsmen from Stoke on Trent who were enticed by high wages.

The early production was centred on high quality domestic ware such as washstands, hospital pans, floor tiles and tableware.

Armstrong and McBirney wanted to make porcelain not only to use local minerals but also to enable the craftsmanship developing in the pottery to develop. In 1863 a small amount of Parian was produced but earthenware remained the principal product until 1920.

The two partners died by 1884 when it became a limited Company funded by local partners. In 1893 Belleek acquired a master craftsman called Frederick Slater, who came form Stoke-on-Trent to become Head of design for forty years. He designed a centrepiece which was awarded a Gold Medal at the Paris Exhibition in 1900.

The First and Second World wars dried up exports of product and Belleek survived by producing basic utility earthenware. After the Second World War Belleek bought two new Allport kilns which used half the amount of coal.

They now concentrated all their efforts on Parian ware and by 1952 were barely keeping up with demand so invested in electric kilns followed by modernisation of workshops but by late 1970's tastes were changing. The Pottery was sold in 1984. and twice more in the following six years.

The Belleek Visitor Centre was built in 1989 and the Group is now owned by the Moore family from Washington DC.

The Company portfolio has increased with the acquisition of Galway Irish Crystal in 1993; Aynsley China in 1997 and Donegal China in 2000.

It was a fascinating visit and we were well looked after with lunch in the cafe. The shop was a treasure trove and showed the range of lovely products in their range and many came away clutching their purchased China.

The river running alongside the pottery marks the border with the Republic and there was a bridge only a few yards away from the entrance so Andrew Cragg and Roger Bell went for a quick trip into the EU - just for the hell of it - and, no GAR form, no flightplan, no passport and no Border Force!

Anne Cragg



Roger Bell and Andrew Cragg

Hawker Rebuild –Elmset Suffolk


Roger Bell




Peter Johnson (Chief Engineer of Hawker Restorations)

On Tuesday 7th June, 33 aircraft and 41 Flying Farmers and guests met at Elmsett airfield, Suffolk. We were there at the invitation of FFA member Charles Course who owns the airfield with the adjoining land and buildings wherein are sited Hawker Restorations Ltd. who restore Hawker Hurricanes.

The first event of the day was coffee and breakfast snacks in one of Charles' vintage farm machinery hangars served by his PA Kate who seemed to be everywhere doing everything throughout the day. Members and guests were allowed to look at the extensive array of vintage and some more modern farm machinery which had been taken out of storage and arranged around the apron areas for our inspection. We were encouraged to look around at the magnificent collection which, for many of us, was a trip down memory lane. Charles had examples of every tractor from the little grey Fergie and E27N Fordson, a Fordson caterpillar, an IH half-track, a Nuffield 4/60, numerous John Deeres to the 'modern' Ford 1,000 series to name just a few.

After everyone had arrived and received a refreshing glass of juice or a cup of coffee we all moved up to a larger hanger for a presentation by Charles about the organisation of Heathpatch Ltd and its subsidiaries. Charles is Chief Executive of Heathpatch Ltd. 95% of the group's commercial activities are within its 4 trading subsidiaries. However, it also has a joint venture farming agreement with farming neighbours AJ Pratt and sons; which trades as Brett Vale Farming Ltd. (BVFC)

BVFC's objective is to provide contracting services to its shareholder's farms at the lowest possible cost by aiming for breakeven. All shareholders join on a 50/50 basis and loans are arranged pro rata to the services used. There are 3 full time and 2 part time staff operating with around £2.5m worth of machinery. The shareholders are farming 4,000 acres of cropped land with total operating costs of less than £200/ac and a LP&M cost of around £170 per acre. The JV is working well, with a positive and well motivated team that enjoy working together and where there is more opportunity for career development than just working on a single smaller farm. The farms have extensive stewardship and environmental schemes in addition to the arable cropping and cover around 6000 acres in total.

Heathpatch is owned by James Buckle and has diversified by borrowing money against the farmland to invest in trading subsidiaries, with the objective of increasing the overall return on capital. The other businesses include Nedging Hall Estate which operates a hotel, 2 pubs, a brewery and holiday let. Global Recycling Solutions Ltd, that imports sells and services recycling machinery and Sany construction equipment. Camden Boss Ltd that manufactures electronic components and enclosures and Material Change Ltd, a business that has anaerobic digesters and composting plants across the UK. The digesters and composting businesses are using feedstock that is either grown as silage or they can take in food waste and chicken muck. We were given a good, interesting insight into how the businesses had grown and how they are run now. MCL also owns Pedersen Contracting Services which mucks out chicken sheds and supplies chicken litter into power stations, AD plants and to farmers. The group employs over 400 staff, demonstrating that it is a very diversified farm business.

Thousands of trees have been planted, with the aim eventually of regenerating 200 acres of ancient woodland, and extensive use is made of stewardship margins and legume fallows to rationalise field shapes. The farms also have four solar panel installations.

By the time Charles had finished his full account of all activities lunch was calling so we returned to the original hangar where a full barbecue had been created by the Nedging Hall hotel staff. The lunch was excellent, there was a delicious range of meats and vegetables and salads available. There were soft drinks, water and beers available from Mauldons Brewery. The tables were groaning with the weight of food and drink.

After lunch and a few moments to let the excellent meal settle, we were invited to a tour of the Hurricane Heritage Restoration hangar. Our host for this event was the general manager and chief engineer Peter Johnson of Hawker Restorations who gave us an illuminating and amusing insight into not only rebuilding a Hurricane but the complexities of designing aircraft for maximum performance coupled with the difficulties of firing heavy weapons. Peter covered many types including the De Havilland Mosquito and others.

The highlight of the presentation was the presence of numerous parts of a Hurricane undergoing restoration which had flown into the ground in a vertical dive at maximum throttle, after the pilot had bailed out. The force of the impact was so great that the engine, a Rolls-Royce Merlin had become deformed and the crank was bent to 90°. We were shown the all-important identification plate which gave the constructors number and the job number lending the wreckage provenance that was important for it to be regarded by the CAA as a restoration. Without that all-important plate the aircraft would have

been a replica. The difference in value being about £750,000.

Our host went on to describe many interesting facts about the construction of aircraft. Not least being the equations, which are worked out by aircraft designers to ensure that the aircraft would not collapse in flight and that they were able to withstand power dives in excess of VNE.

We were alarmed to hear that the famous De Havilland Mosquito which had been designed to such narrow tolerances of structural strength that aircraft were lost due to catastrophic structural failure during war time.

The next item on the agenda was a farm tour on a trailer drawn by a vintage John Deere tractor that was started by a donkey engine by our very own Tony Fisher. Our driver Steve who is chief mechanic for the collection of vintage and veteran vehicles managed to drive this extremely difficult tractor very smoothly. The gearchange mechanism was baffling, being commanded by cables none of which appeared to give the right amount of push or pull to the gearbox selectors.

We travelled around the adjoining fields and saw Charles' excellent standing crops in fine heart. The fields, hedgerows and environmental areas managed by Charles are a credit to him and his crew for their neatness, accuracy of drilling and sympathetic management of the countryside generally.

The final event of the day was a cream tea served by the ubiquitous Kate which was enjoyed by all, and yes you are right in the east of England the cream goes on first before the jam when you eat a scone!

Members and guests then departed for their home airfields in clear but windy weather while the tractors, combines and other assorted equipment were returned to the storage places.

Author David Keene,
with contributions from Roger Bell and Charles Course





Roger Bell presenting Charles Course with an FFA clock

Vintage Extravaganza

Day one – Ingall Brothers

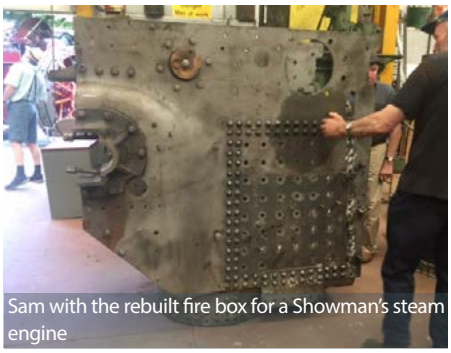


Peter and David Ingall sold their construction business in 2002 and have devoted a huge amount of time, energy (and money) establishing a stunning collection of vintage tractors, plant, cars, trucks, steam engines and a lot more.

The collection is impressive for the quality and quantity of items they have acquired. However, what I found even more impressive was the huge range of skills the brothers and their team have developed to restore such a wide range of items. On arrival, we were shown around the heavy engineering workshop which included a home made riveting press that can exert 400t of pressure on the hot rivets. The workshop really gives visual meaning to 'heavy engineering'. Having been shown around the workshop we saw a very well put together film of the restoration of their Maclaren engine, that was parked behind us. The engine is immaculate in every way, which is even more impressive having seen the film of the state it was in when it left New Zealand and the enormous amount of work that has gone into restoring it. My overwhelming feeling was that restoring a steam engine has to be a labour of love, as nothing can be rushed, and the team had to learn quite a lot of skills in order to do it. The paint finish is unbelievable, even more so having seen in the film that it is hand painted as it would have been originally. I thought that spraying paint was a skill and art that took time to prefect, but this adds a whole new dimen-


Peter Ingle standing beside the Lincoln he restored




Sam with the rebuilt fire box for a Showman's steam engine



Caterpillar D9 G

sion to a skill learned over a lifetime.

After looking at the restored Maclaren we were invited to look in some more sheds…

We went from the heavy engineering workshop to the wood workshop. As with steam, the brothers have taught themselves woodworking and coach making skills to be able to completely restore 1920's wooden bodied cars. This workshop then opens onto another substantial building, full of immaculately restored vehicles. A pair of ploughing engines, a few more steam engines, 20 or so immaculately restored tractors, probably 20 cars and more than 50 motorcycles. There was a beautifully restored John Deere 820 and it's a shame that Tony didn't get a chance to drive it around, as he did mine at Elmsett a week or so earlier – complete with 'sharp' hand clutch. Some concours lorries from the 40's and 50's and in pride of place a Lincoln continental that had been found in a barn locally. Later we saw another fascinating film about the Lincoln motor company and its relationship with Ford as well as the restoration of this particular vehicle. Just like the machinery, the films had been made with significant research and attention to detail.

We could have spent half a day in this shed alone – but there was more to see! We looked into 3 more large agricultural buildings where the current farming business operates from. However tucked into the corner of 2 sheds and filling a third were probably another 50-100 tractors . Just about every variant of standard Fordson and E27N and plenty of tracklayers including a CAT D9G and an International that was at least as large, plus lots of smaller 40-80hp crawlers and a very tempting New Holland 8070 that had been bought from a neighbour (along with some other items for largely nostalgic reasons I think). I did ask if they would sell the 8070, but didn't get much response… However, they did sell a significant number of machines a few years ago – which seems remarkable after seeing so many that they still have.

As we walked back to the heavy workshop/cinema we passed some of their modern fleet with a couple of rubber tracked CAT's parked in the yard. The family still farm a substantial acreage, now largely run by the next generation leaving Peter and David free to concentrate on their collection.

The afternoon ended with more delicious home made cakes from Ann, Jane and Sue and another rendition from the fairground organ that greeted us on arrival.

With many thanks to Peter, David, Bob, Steve, Cliff, Karl, Ann, Jane and Sue for a really fascinating visit with some memorable hospitality.

Charles Course


Left to right; First unknown, David Ingle, Peter Ingle, Tony Fisher, Sam and Mark Ingle

Overnight stay and dinner at the Petwood Hotel, Woodhall Spa



Petwood Hotel, Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire

After an excellent day viewing a mix of rare vintage cars, buses and agricultural machinery, fortified by lunch at the Red Lion at Revesby, we arrived at the Petwood Hotel in time to enjoy a walk round the beautiful gardens and through the romantic rose walk with the roses in full bloom.

The Petwood Hotel was the 617 Squadron Dambusters Officers Mess between 1943 and 1945 and has much important memorabilia including a branch that got stuck in the tail section of one of the Lancasters over the Ruhr Valley during the raid and carried back to East Kirkby. It is proudly displayed over the Squadron bar. Tucked away in the corner of the garden is one of the only remaining prototypes of the Barnes Wallis famous bouncing bombs.

After a pre-dinner aperitif we sat down to a delicious dinner of melon and berries, followed by roast beef and Yorkshire pudding and finished with lemon tart and berry coulis, all accompanied by good wine and the most convivial company.

The speaker for the evening was Mike Chatterton, the well known Lancaster pilot who had run the taxi service on the Lancaster Just Jane on East Kirkby airfield for several years.

Mike was born into a farming family but he was inspired to fly from an early age by his father, John Chatterton, who was a Lancaster pilot in the second world war. Airfix kits were an important part of Mike's childhood along with helping on the farm. He joined the Air Training Corps as a teenager and got his gliding wings and due to his obvious ability and enthusiasm he was offered a flying scholarship to Newcastle University.

Joining the RAF after university he gained experience on many famous aeroplanes with evocative names including, Shackletons, Nimrods Mk II; Lancasters; Dakotas; Mosquitos and Tiger Moths. He also qualified as a helicopter pilot. In the RAF he flew Search and Rescue and flypasts at weekends, appearing in many flying shows, which he loved.

In 1989 he was very happy indeed to join the BBMF (Battle of Britain Memorial Flight) at Coningsby where he progressed to Captain the Lancaster.

East Kirkby airfield and the owners, the Panton family, have been very special to Mike and his father and their connection goes back a long way. Mike's father flew Lancasters over Germany from East Kirkby at the height of the war and Mike is rightly very proud of him.

Keeping it in the family, daughter Amy now has her pilot's wings.

The crowning glory of Mike's flying was the VJ celebration in London in August 1995 where a million poppies were released from the Lancaster over The Mall during the flypast, giving a spectacular display.

Mike retired from the RAF after 40 years' service. He bowed out leading the contingent at the annual Festival of Remembrance that year held at the Royal Albert Hall commemorating all those that have fallen in the service of their country.

A most inspiring talk and a fitting end to a wonderful day.

Anthea Brown



Mike at the Royal Albert Hall



Just Jane at East Kirkby

Day Two – David O'Connor

On the second day of our 2022 visit to East Kirkby we were ferried, once again by our driver in his huge luxury coach to our first visit of the day.

Our route took us along a winding Lincolnshire route which, as we progressed, became ever narrower until the bus was parting the branches of some of the roadside trees leaving me with some anxiety for the safety of our coach. Finally we were advised that we had arrived but would face a short walk to our destination down a track.

After a few false moves we discovered where we should be and we were welcomed into ' The Organ Shed' by our host David O' Connor. The building was some 30x50 feet , carpeted, air conditioned , insulated and decorated. Clearly this was no farmers barn. Within it were displayed David's collection of musical boxes dating back to the 18th Century and came in a variety of shapes, configurations and sizes. In reality the only link with farming people was that they were mechanical, very complicated and highly technical.

David played several examples to us and whilst we listened our eyes cast around his collection of 7 classic, old vehicles lining the sides of the building. He explained that many of the first musical boxes were manufactured in Switzerland , the first being in around 1790. His collection ranged from Wurlitzer juke boxes to the most exquisite inlaid wooden cased machines which were designed to compliment the furnishings in houses of the wealthy in those early days. He also owned 3 early fairground type organs one of which was capable of testing the best earplugs.

Lunch was provided by JJ's Cafe in a delightful shepherds hut just outside the main building after which we all walked down the drive to his house where we were welcomed into the Piano shed to see and hear his collection of self playing pianos . We were made aware of the scarcity of any one now capable of making/repairing such intricate and delicate mechanical antiques these days. Outside the house was parked David's beautifully restored 1929 Rolls Royce saloon car. As has become the norm these days David was presented with an electric clock emblazoned with the FFA logo when being thanked.



1929 Rolls Royce saloon car

Mike Cuttell

You never know what you may see, and how you might react.

When returning from Tony's 2 day tour we were passing overhead one of the Main Railway links very close to Peterborough, when we saw a rather large fire burning. There with a strong Westerly wind, the fire was spreading towards a large storage depot. As there seemed to be no one in attendance, I gave a call to London Info and raised the Alarm. I was able to give them the Lat and Long, and they in turn notified the local fire service.

This came out as a news flash later. 17/06/2022
On Friday 17th @17:45. 4 Crews were called out to a fire on the A47 near Dogsthorpe, Peterborough
More than 20 firefighters, including crews from Dogsthorpe, Stanground, the Peterborough Volunteer Fire Brigade and Thorney, along with the north roaming fire engine and the water carrier from Ramsey, attended the incident. Crews arrived to find a fire in a field difficult to access, A service drone was used to assist with locating the fire, while a boat was used to ferry firefighters and equipment to the location. Once located, firefighters used light portable pumps and jets to extinguish the fire They returned to their stations by 20.20.

The area was reinspected the following morning. The cause of the fire was accidental. As a follow up later the next week I had a phone call, from the Fire Brigade at Peterborough,asking if I was the Pilot that raised the alarm. They thanked me for raising the alarm, London Info had called the fire Brigade, and in return the Fire Brigade contacted London info, and they traced the reg of the A / C and contacted the owner, who in turn passed on my details.

Neville Stops



Bicester Heritage





On a beautiful July morning we all flew into the 400 acre, former RAF Bicester airfield, to be guided into parking positions by Charlie Papworth in his official yellow attire. We were then welcomed by Charlie Morgan for tea and coffee under the gazebo. A nice convivial gathering of FFA members, only to later be told to vacate some spaces for the Tiger Moth residents to operate their pleasure flights, well you did try Charlie.

We split into two groups to be shown around by Charlie Morgan and Fergy who are directors of Bicester Heritage Co. First A Type hanger was built in 1926 housing private aircraft including several Tiger Moths. Then through to new buildings built in heritage style housing the Hero Company who specialise in U K historic car events and vintage car rentals, the next new building had a replica battery powered Bugatti Type 35, so used for film work.

There's still evidence of the narrow gauge rail track that was used to bring in supplies to this former magnificent old RAF station with a myriad of splendid buildings now being brought back into a centre of excellence for historic cars and associated businesses .

The old fire station housing Burlen Carburetor Co, Morgan's in the splendid old former pump house and then Blower Bentley,s in the old workshops with all the original overhead cranes .

A nice smattering of vintage cars parked around the site and a Magneto shop run by a fascinating man to whom Richard Butler found interesting the fact that he was a Humber apprentice as was Richard's father, which required another visit by Richard as time didn't allow that day.

There's a training facility for budding mechanics, a brewery and also a gin distillery on site. The whole atmosphere of the place is quite wonderful and more restoration and development of the site is ongoing complimented by the magnificent trees that were planted in the 1920's. All in all a splendid day out thanks to Rebecca Rayner who organised everything topped of by a leasurely lunch under the gazebo on quite a hot day enjoyed by all.

Tony Fisher







Bullets and Beer

Tuesday 19th July was the hottest day that the U.K. has ever experienced, but with great good fortune the following day was 15°C cooler as a full house descended on the Wadswick strip, East of Bristol, for the last scheduled visit of the season to 'Bullets & Beer' laid on by Mervyn White - a non-member guest of many meetings, who felt that organising an event would show much gratitude for the pleasure he had gained from enjoying many FFA meetings over the years.

In Devizes there is an old railway tunnel built by Brunel more than a century ago, which is the home of Wiltshire Ballistics Services Ltd. When you are going to make a lot of loud 'bangs', an old railway tunnel over 250 yards long well underground is the best place not to disturb the local population.

Our host Paul whose business, Wiltshire Ballistic Services Ltd it is, led us down the tunnel for about 100 yards and into a small reception area where he proceeded to show us a superb power point display of the history of missiles from the earliest age where people threw rocks at one another, through to the Roman 'ballistica' and 'catapulta', and on to swords, crossbows, longbows then flintlock pistols and rifles, and all the way up to the most modern armaments. Within the presentation there were ultra slow motion video clips of all types of experiments, showing the importance of how stability was imparted to the arrow/bullet/missile. For example the simple arrow in a bow and arrow, has the feathers, or fletches as they are known, set at a very slight angle to impart a rotation to the arrow as it flies, thus







Left to right; Rifle for firing ammunition, velocity testing equipment, bullet proof glass testing



giving gyroscopic stability to allow it to fly straight - as shown by a slo-mo video clip (I bet you didn't know that!). This is the same principle that is applied to a rifle bullet as it is fired - hence the 'rifling' within the barrel of the gun to rotate the bullet as it travels down the barrel. Every single bullet that is fired will have an unique set of markings imparted to it as it travels down the barrel rifling (exactly like a fingerprint) on it which will connect it to a particular gun - which is how many criminals can be forensically connected to a crime.

These principles carry on all the way up to modern munitions and artillery pieces, and video clips showed several aspects of the path of projectiles from the moment they leave the muzzle to mid-flight. To be able to show a bullet or missile in flight, and to measure its speed requires very sophisticated radar measuring equipment, but it simply is not possible to move a camera at the required speed or stability to capture the event and so it is quite literally 'all done with mirrors'.

The business is primarily aimed at customers who need information on their products - be that for offensive (how effective is the bullet) to defensive (protective vests and material such as glass), and provides an impartial service for weapons, ammunition and armour testing. The one area they don't have facilities for is the testing of shotgun ammunition for the simple reason that they are not able to clear the foul air produced from multiple discharges in sufficient quantities to meet current legislation.

Unfortunately as with all these things, we were time-limited and the presentation was rather rushed to enable the rest of the day to be fitted in. Many of us could have spent three times as long going over the various parts of the presentation again, re-visiting some of the videos and fascinating information on the slides

We were now taken on the the fun, practical side of things and divided into two groups. We were first allowed onto a 25 yard range to play with some air rifles, and then to a testing area where a sheet of 'bullet proof' glass was to be tested against a pre-determined firing test with a 7.62mm rifle (AK47 size) which made a most impressive bang! To pass the test it had to withstand three bullets being fired from around 10 yards into a triangular section of the glass target of about 6" between each of the three points without either penetrating the glass or disrupting the rear face of the glass in any way. This was a pretty aggressive test of the strength of the glass - which passed without any failure.

The final part of the visit was to a section deeper into the tunnel where we were shown around eight different automatic and semi automatic weapons of past and present that are used in conflicts around the world - the most famous of which is undoubtedly the Kalashnikov AK47, of which some 100 million have been made since it was first introduced in 1947.

Each of these weapons was demonstrated to us in semi automatic mode. Whilst we stood well back with ear defenders on, it was still an impressive assault on the ears - and clearly great fun for the man pulling the trigger. Most of the weapons fire at the rate of 900 rounds a minute - you try reloading at the rate of 15 rounds every second without getting in a muddle - and some of these weapons were seriously old. The AK47 itself is nearly 75 years old and most of the others older even than that.

For those living in the area, their is also a retail shop within the business in the tunnel which sells almost anything and everything connected to sport shooting, from ammunition, to targets, to clay pigeon traps and the clay targets for them, to decoys and a large variety of clothing of all types.

After a vote of thanks to all concerned, the coach took us to Devizes where an excellent ploughmans lunch beckoned at the Bear pub. As lunch drew to a close we were given a presentation by two ex-employees of Wadworth Brewery, who were now regular tour guides for parties such as ours and they turned out to be the perfect double act each feeding off the other in both knowledge and humour.

Another PowerPoint presentation - this time of the history of Wadworth, how it came about as a family business and how it specialises in award-winning beers in its business plan, how the brewing takes place and why consistency is the key to their success.

Martin Gosling.

There was a man from Devizes...



Wadworths Brewery was set up in 1875 by Henry Alfred Wadsworth who was a local and rather wealthy farmer! He was also an aviator and once took off in a balloon from Wilton near Salisbury and eventually crash landed near Poole in Dorset!

The first brewery was at Northgate and was able to produce 2.5 million pints per year. The beer was well liked by the people of Devizes and the surrounding villages and very soon they found that they couldn't keep up with demand. This was a time before "Majestic" and so the availability of good booze would have been more limited back then.

In 1885 a new brewery was established in Devizes which could produce 12.5 million pints per year and provided beer for the whole region supplying 140 pubs.

At that time, Henry brought in a partner to help with the new brewery. His name was John Smith Bartholomew. He eventually married Henry's sister and as Henry had no male descendants, the business eventually passed onto his sister and Bartholomew and remains within the family to this day.

Wadworths is one of the few breweries who still deliver their beer to local pubs using Dray horses and will deliver up to 2.5 miles radius from the brewery. A Dray horse can pull twice its body weight, so a pair of horses can pull up to 4 tonnes, with few emissions, and what emissions there are tend to be good for the garden!

Wadworths are unique in that they still hand paint all of their pub signs and it takes Dave the painter about 2 weeks to produce a sign. Interestingly he includes a subtle difference on each side of the sign and the trick is to find that difference. Apparently 4 pints of 6X helps!

A wide range of beers are produced at the Brewery, but the most famous one has to be 6X which has been in production for over 100 years. Others include Henry's IPA, Bishops Tipple, Swordfish, Old Timer and Horizon. They also produce many seasonal beers such as Dirty Rucker which is produced for the 6 Nations tournament and George and Dragon to celebrate St Georges day.

Malting Barley is sourced from Norfolk and has been for many years in order to ensure consistency. They use about 1200 tonnes per year and the variety is Marris Otter. According to one of our esteemed members you can identify Marris Otter by its hairy richella. I wasn't sure how to spell this so checked out "hairy richella" on Google and it came up with some very interesting sites, none of which were remotely linked to Barley.

At the time of the first lockdown, the brewery were left with a large quantity of beer which was in 9 gallon barrels called Firkins. Apparently the name "Firkin" came from the fact that they were quite heavy to lift! The beer was not wasted and was eventually processed into hand sanitiser.

Following our brewery talk and ploughman's lunch in The Bear, we were then escorted by our hosts Jim and Kev for a walk around Devizes. We were lucky to see the biggest Cock in Devizes who leaned out of his window and told us to move as we were standing on private property! We then went on to see the second biggest cock in Devizes, a rather fine 4ft bronze effigy of a prime Rooster, which was outside of the Hen House bridal shop!

The lads managed to keep us all together and highly amused with their typically "Wiltshire" humour and Jim was able to manage the traffic to ensure that there were no casualties en-route to our next pub which was The Three Crowns. However, prior to entry to this establishment a rowdy but good natured exchange took place with the lady who was hanging out of the window in the Muck and Dunder who obviously had past history with our hosts!

Our final stop was at the Wadworths Brewery and Visitors centre where we were able to purchase more beer to take home, and very thoughtfully, the pilots and drivers were given 2 bottles each in lieu of the fact that we were not able to sample the beers on our tour.

As we approached the airfield for our return flights the skies turned ominously dark but the rain stayed away until we had all departed.

David Hunt

Final thanks to all who had made our visit so very interesting, saw us remount the bus to travel back to the airfield for our planes (and to the car park for those that drove) for our various journeys home.

In our case we flew through heavy rain around the Brize Norton area heading east - but this dissipated to warm dry winds back in the east where we have had no rain since the first week of June and harvest will be near to be completed by the end of July.

An extremely interesting visit to end our FFA visits for the year.

Martin Gosling.

White Waltham Pop-In, 26th March



Our 2021/2 winter series of Pop-In meetings have generally been blessed with very good weather, with only our first planned meeting to Tollerton on the 6th November cancelled due to high winds and low cloud. Congratulations to the two members who determinedly still attended!

Our last meeting of the winter was held on 26th March at my beautiful 'home' airfield of White Waltham, the wartime home of the ATA. The morning dawned a little hazy, but with light North Easterly winds and a cloudless blue sky. Eleven aircraft flew in, with just one cancellation, and nineteen members and their guests enjoyed lunch together in a private room adjacent to the bar. These areas at White Waltham are little changed from when they were used by the ATA. The now very thin and threadbare flag that used to fly over the buildings is on display in one of the corridors together with many interesting photographs. One of my favourite photos shows the ATA pilot, Joan Hughes, standing next to the mainwheel of the Short Stirling bomber that she is about to deliver. The wheel stands taller than the pilot!

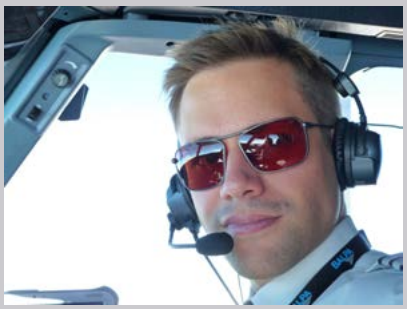
After lunch we all enjoyed chatting together outside in the wonderfully warm March sunshine before reluctantly setting off for home. What better way to spend a Saturday lunchtime.

David Keene.



Above right; Joan Hughes, standing next to the Short Stirling bomber that she is about to deliver.
Main group photo; line up of attendees left to right; Peter Gale, Charles Flint, Tony Fisher, Bill Boutcher-West, Mervyn White, Steve Goddard, Rick Holt, Fliss Holt, David Keene, Ray Friedlander, Judith Marcham, Am Lee, Neville Stops, Mike Woodhouse.

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The FFA – How It All Began







Above main picture: After 50 Years of fun
Top right: My first Aeroplane, an Aeronca Sedan with a Swiss one, same vintage in the background
Top right lower: My favourite go anywhere Husky A1. A fast reliable aeroplane. Amazing short field performance. I owned it for 23 years and it is now owned by one of our members
Lower left: A 10 hour course on a T6 or Harvard in the States. Exhilarating flying
Lower right: The Stearman as it was during the 1980's. I had to have it rebuilt and repainted in US Navy colours after a friend ground looped it and broke the right lower starboard spar. We are still good friends!

I was born into a Surrey Dairy Farming family in 1939 just as the Second World War was about to begin. My family farmed three farms in those days totalling about 1000 acres. My paternal Grandfather had come to Aldershot at the beginning of the First World War and by hard work and some good luck was contracted by The War Ministry to supply a large part of the Camp as it was known in those days, with dairy produce. My father, like his father was an expert dairyman and managed the horses for the Dairy. There were three dairy Herds to manage.

My maternal Grandfather was a military man. He came back to Aldershot from serving in South Africa after fighting The Boers and prior to joining the RFC worked for a while with Samuel Cody who at that time at Farnborough was building and designing kites. Aviation of any kind was in it's infancy and I believe my Grandfather found it an interesting career for he stayed with Cody until he joined the Royal Flying Corps and then the Royal Airforce under Trenchard in 1918. He then was seconded to the Royal Naval Air Service in Bembridge on the isle of Wight. It was unfortunate that a serious motor bike accident cut short a brilliant military career. Again on my mother's side of the family my second cousin flew as an observer in the Second World War under Admiral Cunningham in the Mediterranean and was involved in the damage to the Italian Fleet at Taranto in 1940 and the sinking of three Italian Cruisers off Cape Matapan in 1941.

I therefore had an interesting start in my life into aviation and into farming and as luck would have it our main Dairy Farm was on the Northern slopes of the Hog's Back 3 miles south of Farnborough and it was just possible to see the threshold of Runway 24. Downwind (left) for this runway was immediately over the farm and we had the most amazing views of so many different types of aircraft flying overhead.

I was sent to boarding school in Sussex in 1946 and prepared myself for National Service when I was eighteen which many had to do, however it all came to an end in 1959 and I found myself working on the family farm which now desperately needed modernising, all thoughts of a career in aviation were quickly dispelled and I turned my interest into expanding and improving the dairy herd. Even though I did two years at Agricultural College I found that I had not chosen a very profitable career and I contacted my local National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAAS) for help and advice.

Peter Hood our adviser in West Surrey visited us regularly through the 1960s and on one occasion I had to cut short his visit as I had booked a flying lesson and wished to take advantage of a beautiful sunny day. When I explained to Peter that I wished to









be excused to go off to a flying lesson at Blackbushe he remarked that he used to do a bit of flying at one time. When I asked him what he flew, expecting him to say Tiger Moths and Austers, he casually remarked that he flew Stirlings and Lancasters and did his initial training in Alabama under General Hap Arnold's scheme for training Allied pilots, he was shot down by a Junkers 88 night fighter over Nuremberg in March 1944. His ab initio flying was done on a Stearman, an aeroplane I had always wanted to own and eventually did in 1979. Peter and I remained firm friends until he sadly died in 2020, he had a brilliant obituary in The Daily Telegraph.

Having obtained my licence I turned my thoughts to buying an aeroplane and I eventually shared one with my neighbour and a few BOAC (as it was then) pilots. Our chosen aircraft, an Aeronca Sedan had survived a winter under water in America after hitting a landing dock. It had spent a year or two in Abu Dhabi and needed some serious work done to it. We raised £850 and bought the aircraft from Doug Bianchi at Booker and it was expertly repaired by Bill Bowker, a crop duster and aircraft restorer based just outside Luton and it served our group for several years. It is still owned and flown by one of the original members of the group.

Sometime in the early 70s our local newspaper reporter saw me flying from my airstrip and wrote something about me in the paper. Somehow this was read by someone in Farmers Weekly and Edward Long, who wrote in Farmers Weekly, called on me to find out what I was up to. Edward was a very enthusiastic glider pilot. His Editor was Travers Legge, a former Coastal Command pilot who was friendly with Colonel John Williams Wynne and it was these three gentlemen who really started the organisation which we have today. I was introduced to David Corbett, who owned Shobdon, who was friendly with all three. It was generally agreed that we should try and gather together as many farmers who flew to form a Limited Company, and slowly but surely with the help of Farmers Weekly and the enthusiasm of John Williams Wynne, Edward Long, David Corbett Travers Legge and several other farmers, this came about and the company was formed. Colonel John organised a lunch at The Rag (Army and Navy Club) in London and I was introduced to the Chairman of the CAA Lord Boyd Carpenter. It was suggested that I should attend the General Airworthiness Consultative Committee which regularly met at the CAA offices at Redhill. I only very reluctantly agreed to attend because I had just bought an adjoining farm and as well as being a full time working farmer my father and I were involved in livestock haulage and I had so little spare time to go to all these meetings but thankfully David Corbett and one or two other members were always there to take my place.



We frequently met on farms and airfields up and down the country. The first unofficial meeting was a Maize Demonstration in 1973. Several of us came to the first official meeting in April 1974 which was the Farmers Weekly Drainage Event. Our first foreign trip was to Amsterdam and I cannot remember which year this was because I was not flying my own aircraft and it was not entered in my log book but I can remember I was picked up from my farm together with my mother in law (absolutely true) by member Ramsey Dryden and we had a memorable and exciting trip, causing a bit of a panic at Schipol because we had a puncture on a taxiway and almost lost a tyre. I can still see the grinning face of the captain of a KLM 747 looking down on us!

There have been so many visits in our country which I have not attended but I do remember a visit to America as a guest to their Flying Farmers Convention in Kentucky. It was a huge affair and very impressive. The car park in front of the hotel was full of aeroplanes and farm machinery. Some members had flown several thousand miles to attend. The hotel where we all stayed was taken over by their organisation for 5 days . We visited the Phillip Morris factory

Above left: Completed my twin rating Jersey
Above right: Myself, Peter Hood my NAAS advisor, centre, Tom Ransom, right, friend and local farmer. Peter and Tom both flew under the Arnold Scheme started in 1941 in the USA.
Right: Talking to Harold Macmillan in 1980 in front of my Stearman. I can remember him saying that General Montgomery and he had both flown in a Stearman.

where cigarettes were produced by the million daily and exported to China, also the famous Kentucky Racecourse. UPS hosted a special visit. I had no idea it was such a vast organisation.

In 1999 my wife and I visited Sun and Fun in Florida. It was there that I met Mal and Marjorie, I forget their surnames, who operated Goana Air Safaris in Australia at Redcliffe just north of Brisbane. After much discussion it was decided that we would gather a party of our members together and do a trip to Australia and what a wonderful trip that was. Five of us went with our wives and enjoyed a fortnight in Victoria and the South East . I know Paul Stephens and Martin Gosling have written about the two trips we did. The second trip was two years later being to the North East of Queensland.

The time now has come for me to stop flying. I have had fifty years of extraordinarily good fun . I have had one or two scary moments too but I have met some wonderful people and been to some wonderful places, I have flown and owned some beautiful old aeroplanes, and obtained my licence on turbine helicopters. It has given me huge pleasure to have taken a small part in setting up our organisation and I know that despite the problems we are all facing now it will go from strength to strength into a successful future.

Tony Poulsom



Right:
Fairchild Argus F24. A beautiful old aeroplane, which I owned for several years. I was never quite sure of the reliability of the Ranger engine, but it never let me down

International FFA, USA



The 75th International Flying Farmer Convention was held February 6-10, 2022 in Huntsville, Alabama. It had been 2 and a half years since the last convention in Wichita, Kansas due to covid and the U.S. and Canada Border being shut down.

We had 59 members in attendance which is smaller than usual, but with the pandemic worries, and the age of our group, all being older, several members where afraid to come. We did lots of visiting, which is something all farmers like to do. We had committee meetings, tour day, where we visited the U.S. Space and Rocket museum one day, and then we toured the Historic district of Huntsville with tour guides who could tell us the history of several colonial style houses and other sites in the city.

We had the business meeting with enough delegates for a quorum which was very important. There had been a resolution on the table for the last 2 years as to whether to continue the organization because of the falling numbers of members. It was voted on to continue as long as we can. Because of the aging, and the covid, we lost 43 members from the organization since the Wichita convention. This is a lot to lose.

After all other business was taken care of, the new officers were installed. Diana Billheimer, Colorado, President: Jim Meyer, Illinois, Vice President; Dale Bohrer, Iowa, Secretary/Treasure; Clement Dion, Saskatchewan, Past President. We are in the picture above.

Diana Billheimer

FLYING FARMERS ASSOCIATION





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			£8.00
Ties			£15.00
Umbrellas			£29.00
Clocks (NEW)			£30.00
Pens (NEW)			£2.50

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**

For Sale

De Havilland Gypsy Major 1 Engine with Logbooks removed from an Auster Aircraft.

History from Engine Logbook:-

- 20/03/1968 1487:25 Hours Removed from an Auster Aircraft as at TBO for a C of A Aircraft, inhibited before storage.
- 05/05/1983 1487:25 Hours Purchase by current owner and installed in an Auster, Permit to fly.
- 14/08/1987 1556:35 Hours Complete overhaul by Rollason Aircraft & Engines Ltd. Inc new block, Crankshaft and associated components (exact details in log book)
- 03/11/2012 2233:00 Hours Overhaul including new Conrods, Main Bearings, Pistons, and associated components. Exhaust valve hardened guides installed by Deltair with new valves.
- 27/05/2020 2273:00 Hours Crankshaft taper crack tested
- 01/05/2021 2273:00 Hours Top overhaul, new Inlet valves, gaskets etc
- 26/06/2021 2273:15 Hours Ground run.
- Engine is complete, with a total time of 2273:15 Hours, in running condition with known history and log book.
- Includes an Auster engine mounting frame and oil tank, will bolt directly to an Auster Aircraft firewall.

Cowlings are available as are numerous spares.



Please contact Rob on 07880713159
Email: robertthetent@hotmail.com

For Sale

Boeing. Stearman 1944

A/F 1621 hrs
Eng 90 hrs Continental W670 220hp (Vintec)
N Reg
Never a Cropduster
£130,000
Please contact Brendan Walsh on 01680 300377
or email brendan@glenforsa.com



For Sale

Runway Lights

Complete lighting set form Manairco. It includes the control box(220 Volts) on 122.8 to switch the lights on.

I also have 2 strobes, these are visible for about 15 miles at 2000 feet.

The Control box is VHF line of site. We never got round to installing them and I have had them stored in my garage for a number of years.

There are 12 Lights with ground stakes. I am looking for around £950 for the complete set, this is a lot less than I paid for them.

Located very close to Newmarket. Anyone interested could fly into George Gibson's strip at Exning.

Contact Steve Cherry-Downes on

07484 242 168 or
E Mail; stevecherrydownes@msn.com.

For Sale

2018 Aviat Husky

Listed with Bob Pooler at Aviat UK. One owner from new, it is currently based in Mayfield, East Sussex.

165 TT, Annual completed November 2021

This is an immaculate, as new Husky and is very highly spec 'ed, including: – Garmin G796 touch screen GPS with MVP-50 digital engine monitor, GTX 345 ADSB in and out/traffic/weather, Digital attitude indicator, Aerodynamic trim, Wired for Bose, LED lights, Hartzell 76" Composite propeller, 26"Tundra Tyres, RH/LH Aft stowage access, Adjustable front seat, Rear seat heater/defroster, Leather seats

Always hangared, meticulously maintained, no damage history.
Contact us for details +44 (0)1952 770776



SHARE FOR SALE

Stearman syndicate re-forming

Registration N1731B
Airframe 6135hrs
Engine 300hrs since TBO
Continental 225HP

Share in newly formed syndicate near Kemble, Gloucestershire (Oaksey Park, SN16 9SD)

Share available in this £100k plus aeroplane

Beatifully maintained and always hangered

Recent Annual.

For viewings contact Mike Woodhouse
Tel: 01666 575118/Mob: 07771 503710





Aircraft Wanted

With two young children who are now old enough to fly (3 and 1 years old), and a wife who wants to fly more with me, it's time to move on from the two seat LAA aircraft and buy something 2+2, and a bit more grown up.

If anyone knows of a sensibly priced machine for sale, I'd be keen to chat. Something like a Rallye, Jodel type.

If you are able to help please contact myself, **Jonathan Holland directly by email jchfarming@gmail.com**

Profile: Jim Anderson, Hatton, Scotland

By Rebecca Rayner



2009 Netherlands and Norway Tour. We crossed the snow-covered plateau of southern Norway, during our flight from Notodden to Stavanger. Our final flight on that trip was Stavanger direct across the North Sea to our home base, Hatton. It was a rare event, to get home from the European Tour on the day it ended.

Hi There Jim …Tell us about your upbringing…
I was born in 1937, brought up as an only child on the small family farm. My father had me driving an old Fordson tractor when I was 8 years old and heavy enough to push down the clutch pedal while he sat on the binder giving me a loud whistle when to stop!!

I had no formal education on farming but I learned and enjoyed the company of the local Young Farmer's Club.

When did you first gain interest in flying and complete you PPL?
I started to fly in 1976 after my wife Sheila gave me a trial lesson for Christmas. 1976 was a lovely dry summer with record prices for potatoes when I was getting one hour of flying training for the price of 100 kg of potatoes, we will never experience that figure again. After I got my PPL in 1977 a group of us paid £600 for a share in an Auster which formed desirable habits in me, keeping it flying in balance and landing properly with a non steerable tailwheel.

Next aeroplane was a metal Robin, it took me 18 years to discover that I had the wrong type of Robin so I then got the one with the bent wing, in my opinion the best plane in the sky.

How long have you been a member of the Flying Farmers?
I first knew about the FFA through the late member Bill Pinkley who suggested I join.

Thanks to the FFA I have enjoyed tours in nearly every European country including Gibralter and Tangier in NW Africa.

Tell us about your most highlighted trip
My most exciting flight was in New Zealand when we landed at Milford Sound with mountains about 1 mile high close to the aerodrome and on 3 sides.

Do you have any other interests other than flying?...
My limited other interests are shooting vermin, motoring and coach tours with Sheila.

“ My most exciting flight was in New Zealand when we landed at Milford Sound with mountains about 1 mile high close to the aerodrome and on 3 sides. ”