FLYING FARMERS ASSOCIATION

December 2023 newsletter no. 144



CHAIRMAN'S RAMBLINGS

We are certainly getting climate change rammed down our throats at the moment, and whatever the cause, we seem to be getting extremes of weather. We were caught out in late September when we drilled the first 200 acres of barley and 50 acres of wheat and we decided to get the pre-emergent herbicide on, as some light rain was forecast which would have set it off nicely.

We checked the label and it said, 'do not spray if heavy rain forecast', which it wasn't, so we got it on. That night we got 69 mm of tropical rain in 3 hours! The hillsides were gouged out two feet deep, hundreds of tons of soil were washed into our neighbours' fields, there were tons of potatoes washed into a grass field from our neighbours - which the cattle enjoyed, there were ponds all over the place and for the next 2 weeks we wondered if the newly sown corn would survive the sudden poisoning of the herbicide washed down into its rooting zone.

2 months on, the crops have miraculously survived, the barley is still mottled with yellow where there is the slightest compaction, and the wheat looks stunted. We did our best to level up the two foot deep gouges where the deluge had washed soil, seeds, stones and chemical down the valleys into our neighbour's fields. Yet we still consider ourselves lucky compared to the lowland farmers who have hundreds of acres still flooded and not being able to drill at all.

Isn't farming fun! Never boring and certainly challenging.

Then came the news that our second FFA Chairman and first President had died aged 93. Dick Walgate was an inspiring chairman. Whilst he was in the Chair, I was tapped on the shoulder to join the committee as newsletter editor in 1999. I remember his self disciplined military style, his connections with friends in high places and leading from the front. He set high standards and made sure we all wore the FFA tie! I am the fifth chairman and feel quite inferior to his confident leadership.

As our 50th anniversary approaches and I look back over the years to reflect on the 450 events (approx.) we have held all over the U.K. and Europe. We have even ventured into North Africa and dabbled in Australia. We are recognised and have developed good relationships with most aviation authorities and have grown into a friendly association of farmers who fly and enjoy meeting up in different parts of the country, putting our aircraft to the use they were intended.

Not sure of the exact numbers, but we have recruited over 1000 members in those 50 years. But to the 400 plus members we have now, the FFA committee wish you all a Merry (within reason) Christmas and a Prosperous New Year with a little more settled weather.

Paul Stephens

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Publisher & Editor: Giles Abrey newsletters@ffa.org.uk
Art Editor & Production: Kirsten Lee, kirsten@leeillustrations.co.uk
Cover photograph Shuttleworth Collection at Old Warden by Giles Abrey

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Martin Gosling	President	01787 269369
Paul Stephens	Hon Chairman/ Hon Secretary	07711 201431
Andrew Cragg	Vice Chairman/Treasurer/ Hon Membership Secretary	01303 874251
Neville Stops	Events Secretary	01264 889678
Gordon Bellerby	Assistant Events Secretary	07802 948000
Alf Oliver	Committee Member	07860 165659
Giles Abrey	Newsletter Editor	07967 665470
Rebecca Rayner	Committee Member	01487 773282

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Registered Office: Brooker Farm, Newchurch, Romney, Kent, TN29 0DT

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8807 J. Milsom from Pewsey, Wilts
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8803 C. Shipley from Bristol
8802 T. Spencer from Ipswich, Suffolk
8801 J. McCullough from Comber, Down
8787 J. Blake from Hereford, Hertfordshire

Departing Members

Dick Walgate Former President, Chairman & Hon. Member Passed Away

In Memory of Dick Walgate



Dick Walgate pictured here in the front row, second from left, taken at Kilkenny, FFA Tour of Ireland 1997

Dick Walgate, who was the second Chairman of the FFA, and was also its first President, died on October 27th at the age of 93.

Dick served the Association for many years and was a very active and enthusiastic member. He arranged many of the earlier events and study tours and was a great mentor to new members of the Association encouraging them to join in as many FFA activities as possible

In the time that I knew him he had a Cessna 206 which he used to commute between his farm in Lincolnshire and his other two farms in the North of England and Scotland. Many a deer carcass was thrust into the large luggage compartment, to bring from north to south. It was a true farmer's aeroplane workhorse. He even had a spraying kit for the aircraft and did his own crop spraying, in the days when it was allowed, but never for other people. This endorses the flying skills that he has, as that is not a job for the faint-hearted.

He was a very keen shooting man and an extremely competent shot, and travelled to many parts of the world in pursuit of his sport. He also developed an excellent shoot on his own land, and for several years he ran his 'Flying Farmers Shoot' for the benefit of those that were lucky enough to be invited.

After he hung up his guns, golf formed a large part of his life which he participated in with his usual expertise, and had a regular gang of fellow golfers to keep him company, until gradually their numbers dwindled through old age, and he was unable to keep playing.

After he gave up flying and sold his beloved Cessna, he very much enjoyed coming to as many events as he was able, to keep up with the many friends that he had in the Association, frequently coming as a passenger with his good friend Paul Burtwistle.

Not someone to suffer fools gladly, he will, however, be remembered with much affection within the Association as a person who did so much to guide the association to where we find it today.

Martin Gosling

IMPORTANT Membership Matters

1 Subscription increase April 2024

At the recent FFA AGM it was resolved to increase the subscription from £25 to £50 with effect from April 2024.

For those members who pay their subscription by GoCardless, no action is required since FFA will take the new amount directly on the renewal date of 26th April.

Members who still pay their subscription by Standing order (SO), who wish to remain a member must either,

- Amend their SO with their bank using whichever process is usual for their bank, now often online. The FFA cannot do this for you.

Or

- Cancel their SO and sign up for Go Cardless direct debit in good time to collect the new sub in April 2024.

Go to https://pay.gocardless.com/AL00032MSHY9RB

If you have not signed up to GoCardless, a flyer will be included in your newsletter.

2. 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. 65% of our membership routinely 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.

If you don't want them, unsubscribe at the bottom of any email or contact us as above.

*** NEW COMPOSTABLE PACKAGING ***

You might have noticed that your newsletter has arrived packaged in an eco friendly fully compostable bag rather than the traditional envelopes. These can be placed in your recycle waste bin or home compost.

General Aviation Awareness Council

Nothing to report

GASCo

The General Aviation Safety Council

Nothing to report

GAP – General Aviation Partnership

Nothing to report

Deadline for articles for the March newsletter is 14th February 2024

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.

Please email newsletters@ffa.org.uk

Please note change in newsletter email address; newsletters@ffa.org.uk

Event organisers will now receive a newsletter check list as well as an event organisers guide when planning an event. This will just help editing the newsletter in knowing running order, expected write ups, photos etc.

The day I became a non flying farmer

Flying has been part of my life for 68 years and in my thoughts for many years longer than that – probably why I failed so many of my 0 levels in reality. But I have been very lucky having owned 7 aircraft, Bensen autogiro, Auster, Airtourer, Robin, Schweitzer 300, Bell 47 and of course my lovely Alouette which trumped them all.

So why did I stop? I didn't fail my medical and I loved my annual flight test, I could still afford it – just and I had no shortage of passengers nor displays to attend and I had gently carried over 100 people.

No, I became another victim of the Campaign to Abolish (private) Aviation. My aircraft is totally fit to fly but TUAG the engineering facility who were the only place to go for an overhaul have stopped covering the Artouste engine fitted to it. It isn't displaying any sign of fatigue or failure by the way and performs every bit as well as when it was overhauled by them because I have been so very careful in running it BUT it has reached 17 years since it was last stripped and that, I am afraid ,is a red line.

So, it is just another one of those lovely vintage turbine types that will no longer be seen and heard in the skies and at Aviation shows. Alouettes are not the only ones to face the axe 'cos the Gazelles are next irrespective of their condition.

When I told the Guernsey authorities that I wanted to de register it they said "fine just fill in the form and enclose a cheque for £250". Why do we always get taken for a ride?

What was I to do? It seemed to me that I could either keep it unused, offer it to a museum or put it up for sale, and with great reluctance I chose the latter.

AV Buyer said that it might be a tricky one to move but, guess what , several interested overseas parties descended within the first week. I had to be honest in my advert so that they knew that it had been grounded by the inflexible rules of the CAA.

Well, tomorrow it starts its journey to South America to an utterly delighted new owner who flew here to inspect it and who has yet to undergo official training despite having shares in two similar crop spraying machines. He did remark that although he would have liked to install it in his lounge he really wanted me to teach him to fly since there are no instructors in his part of the country. I have had to do him a video of preflight checks because he says that they don't really do them over there. Certification? No problem he will fly it.

That just leaves me with a huge space in my hangar which I converted from a cattle barn 7 years ago and a huge vacuum in my life. My grandson dashed down from London today for one last photo and quickly showed me a picture of a Porsche 911 which was on the market ripe for restoration knowing that I am a restless type.

One glance told me that it would absorb around £50,000 to make it into something drivable so, politely, I declined.

As my family said , treading very gently 'cos there have been one or two tears, "well you have yet to finish the diesel generator installation to supply our home", (an 87 year old 4.5 ton Ruston Hornsby single cylinder air start which after 50 dormant years is likely to run in a couple of weeks – don't ask the cost), and I have also been promising to completely clean out and widen my river in the new year.

Will this replace my Alouette? Not likely but on the positive side at least I didn't crash.

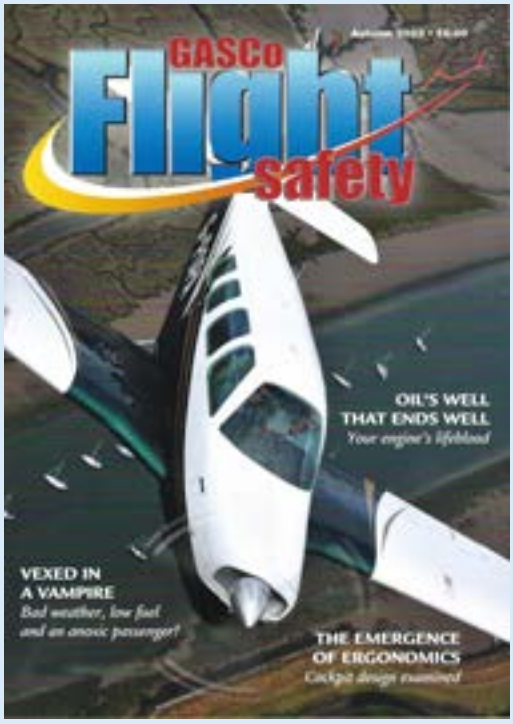
Let me end with a warning. No matter who you are this is going to happen to YOU come what may, so enjoy every single moment whilst you can because (like me) you may never know when that very last flight is going to happen and the reality is sudden and deep believe you me.

Now, where did I leave my garden pruners?

Mike Cuttell, FFA 27



GASCo Safety Evenings



Compton Abbas Airfield 19:30 - Tuesday 16th January 2024
Email: info@comptonairfield.com

Biggin Hill Airport - 18:30 - Tuesday 30th January 2024
Email: ops@flyefg.co.uk

Westonzoyland Airfield 19:30 - Wednesday 7th February 2024
Email: wzsafetypilot@gmail.com

Saling Airfield 19:30 - Tuesday 13th February 2024
Email: info@andrewsfield.com

Sandbach 20:00 - Monday 19th February 2024
Email: sharoncox733@yahoo.co.uk

West London Aero Club 19:30 - Wednesday 21st February 2024
No need to book - all welcome

LAA Kent Strut 20:00 - Thursday 22nd February 2024
Email: hoskinsltd@outlook.com

Samlesbury Aerodrome 19:00 - Wednesday 20th March 2024
Email: rhine59@gmail.com

Welshpool Airport 19:30 - Monday 8th April 2024
Email: midwalesairport@gmail.com

LAA Andover Strut - 20:00 - Monday 8th April 2024
Email: alan.lovejoy18@gmail.com

Goodwood Aero Club TBA - Thursday 9th May 2024
Contact TBA

Further details on GASCO website: https://www.gasco.org.uk/events/safety-evenings

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MEMBERS MISHAPS

ILAFFT (I Learnt About Flying From That)

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

Weather Check

On one of those glorious frosty winter mornings in December 2001, with wall-to-wall blue sky, I had to take my aircraft up to East Winch airfield in North Norfolk for a servicing assignment. I had arranged for a neighbour, based at Earls Colne just 25 minutes flying time away, to come and collect me and bring me home - he was a strictly VFR pilot. He duly arrived on time - but the engineer to whom I needed to give a briefing was still at Old Buckenham airfield dealing with another matter and didn't reappear back at East Winch until over an hour after we were due to meet.

My pilot, John, was getting a bit agitated at the delay, but I needed to see the engineer to give him my instructions. John kept saying that the weather was forecast to deteriorate and we really must get going. I couldn't see what his problem was - the sky was still a deep blue with not a cloud in sight, but it was jolly cold and I only had a shirt and a thin jumper on.

Eventually the engineer rocked up - unapologetically - and I gave him my briefing. Much to the relief of John I jumped in with him, quickly backtracked, lined up and were off. The air was as smooth as silk at 1500' and all went swimmingly until we got about as far as Newmarket when I was aware of just the faintest whisper of clouds - below us. As we carried on the wisps began to merge with fewer and fewer clear bits between them until there were no clear bits left - but our sky above was still a clear deep blue. I suggested that a radio call to Earls Colne just 20 minutes away would be a good idea to get their weather. "Overcast at 400 feet with visibility about 500 metres" was the instant reply!

"Now what shall we do?", he asked. We called up Old Buckenham behind us for their weather, but there was no answer to our call. Getting more and more concerned that the fog was going to spread rapidly over the whole of East Anglia, we did a 180° and headed back North, calling up Lakenheath, who we had just passed, to tell them we were turning back North and ask for their weather. "Cavok" they said "State your intentions". Now really wanting to get on the ground I suggested that we make a weather diversion to them, and asked for it. "Negative" came the reply, but then that was followed by "But if you wish to declare an emergency, you can go to Mildenhall. State your intentions". "What do you reckon we should do?", John asked. A nanosecond later I said, "OK, so let"s declare an emergency".

Having declared said emergency, I could just imagine the controller sitting up in his chair, rubbing his hands together and thinking "This is great, I haven't had one of these for ages"! Now his professionalism really showed through. Having asked all the usual questions about fuel state, and POB etc. he gave us his 100% full attention, taking us every step of the way to Mildenhall, which wasn't very far away, ensuring that we were comfortable with our status at all times and, when we were visual with Mildenhall, handed us over to their Tower controller for our final approach. I have to say that at all times as a passenger, although John was quite stressed, I was as happy as Larry, just quietly monitoring his instruments from the right seat to make sure he didn't do something silly.

Having been put on long finals, we were immediately cleared to land. Now Mildenhall, being a fast jet base, has a runway of just under 3 km, which is quite a lot for a Cherokee. As we came down finals and I was looking around generally, I was aware of a lot of blue flashing lights all around the perimeter but converging towards the threshold, which I thought was a bit of overkill for a little old Cherokee landing in Cavok conditions. John made a textbook landing - just beyond the numbers and asked for instructions. "Taxi to the panhandle, shut down your engine and await instructions" came the reply. What the hell is a 'panhandle' we asked each other.

3 kms takes quite a while at taxiing speed and as we made our way along this enormous runway, I was very aware that there was a phalanx of police cars all with their blue lights flashing following us, which I brought to the attention of John who was rather alarmed - but not nearly as alarmed as we both became as we arrived at the panhandle and shut down our engine, to be immediately and completely surrounded by a cordon of no less that 7 police cars which made sure that we were unable to make a run for it - should we have even wished to! We wondered if this was the way that all aircraft making a precautionary weather diversion were treated, so we just sat there staring at this unwelcome sight and them staring back at us. Permission to taxi on to the apron was denied, being told to remain exactly where we were with the engine off and to remain inside the aircraft and await further instructions. It was all becoming rather strange and we began to worry that we had broken some terrible rule by declaring an emergency.

After about 10 long minutes, the radio crackled into life and we were instructed to taxi to the apron, get out of the aircraft, open the baggage hatch and stand well clear. The car that was parked on our nose backed out of the way and off we went to the apron, followed closely by all 7 police cars which immediately re-surrounded us. Were they about to lob a grenade into the baggage hatch, we wondered. We stood about 15 yards away and by now the December temperature was dropping towards zero and, teeth chattering, I was beginning to get seriously cold.

Another car then rushed up to us, the driver opened the back and a large spaniel leapt out, and upon command, jumped straight into the baggage hatch and started snuffling around the whole cabin area irrespective of our nice clean seats. A few minutes later it re-appeared by the baggage hatch, gave its handler a resigned look which said "There ain't nothing in there, Mate" and jumped back into the van, and off they sped. During this time no one said a word to us and would not engage with us in any shape or form. It was all completely surreal from what we thought was just a straightforward precautionary landing.

We were now ushered inside where it was mercifully a little warmer and told to wait there. I got the distinct impression that this was such an unusual event for them that they were searching around for some manual which was entitled "Procedures

to follow if a civilian aircraft makes an unscheduled landing". A man eventually arrived and started asking us vague questions as to what we were doing and why had we called the emergency. He didn't really seem to know what to ask for what we thought was a pretty straightforward situation. A request to go and have a pee was met with an armed guard escorting me to the loo, and whilst not actually standing at my elbow was firmly positioned in the doorway to presumably prevent me making a run for it! Relief restored, I was taken back to the 'interview' room to meet up with John again. Our interviewer, obviously now fresh out of ideas said that as we had initially declared the Mayday with Lakenheath, we would have to go there to be interviewed all over again as to why, what, where and when.

While waiting to be taken to Lakenheath, we were told that we would not be able to fly away home today but would have to get someone to come and pick us up, so my wife was the obvious candidate, although she was busy with Christmas trade at her retail shop in Long Melford. On answering the phone, she was surprised to be hearing from me and even more surprised to hear my first question which was "Do you want the good news or the bad news first?" Electing for the good news, I told her that we were safe on the ground - but the bad news was that we appeared to be under arrest at Lakenheath airbase, and would she please come and collect us!! I said we would tell her the story later.

A car now came with an English police driver to take us to Lakenheath, and at last we could have some sort of conversation. Asking about our 'reception' with all the police cars, and were they really serious about us, he replied that we should be in no doubt that every one of the 14 people in the cars would have had their weapons across their knees, loaded and with their fingers on the triggers. John and I still couldn't get our heads around as to why a simple precautionary landing had brought about such an overkill response - it was like something out of a film.

The interview at Lakenheath was similarly vague but eventually I think we managed to convince them that we really weren't much of a threat to anyone. And so we now waited the arrival of our rescue element.

Annette, having shut her shop early to come and rescue us, was meanwhile working her way the 40 odd miles North, and eventually arrived at the main gate where she joined a long queue of cars going through security to get in. About 3/4 hour later she reached the front of the queue to be asked if she was coming to the party this evening, but she replied that she had only come to collect two stranded pilots from the guardroom! "In that case, madam, you are at the wrong gate. Take the next gate along, and join the queue there". Reaching the front of the second queue, eventually, she ascertained she was now at the correct gate and was subjected to a thorough search of the boot and had the whole chassis inspected by mirrors before being allowed through.

It was now well and truly dark, but we finally all met up and set off for home with the strict instructions that we were to return for the plane as early as possible the following day to get it out of their hair. A journey which should have taken little over half an hour became about a seven hour marathon. ("Time to spare, go by air" springs to mind!)

On our way home we had time to mull over the extraordinarily bizarre events of the day and suddenly we realised what it was all about…. It was just a few short weeks after 9/11.

Martin Gosling

Fenland Approach 122.925

Pilot:	"Allo, Allo.!"
	Pause
	"Fenland radio. This is Golf -xxxx. We've just past Spalding inbound to you, where are you?"
F.R:	"We are five miles South East of Spalding."
Pilot:	"What Runway are you using"
F.R:	"Runway 08 with a right hand circuit QNH/QFE 1015.
	We have traffic in the circuit at present time."
Pilot:	"Thank you we'll come and see you if we can find you?"
	SILENCE… Some minutes
	"Fenland Radio can't find you, do you know where we are?"
F.R	"Have you any recognition points?"
Pilot:	"We have just flown over a whole lot of gliders, Is that you?"
F.R	"You are over Crowlands, turn N.E. on a heading of 050,we are five miles."
Pilot:	"Thank you we'll come and see you if we can find you if not we'll go home."
	SILENCE…
	"Fenland damned if we can find you, I reckon we'll go home to Waddington, we'll come and see you some other time."
F.R	"Alright G-xxxx thankyou."
	SILENCE…
Pilot:	"That's us again. Would you believe it we must have flown straight passed you a couple of times, we've got you now, we can see you, we are overhead."
F.R	"Its Runway 08 right hand, wind 14 knots QFE 1015. One aircraft on finals."
Pilot:	"Thank you joining down wind."

A Bulldog appears and is dumped un-ceremoniously on the runway! Out got a chap dressed in an old leather waistcoat and cord trousers and farm boots!! Bill and I reckoned he was a Lincolnshire potato farmer!

Peter Minter

I LEARNED ABOUT (OTHER PILOTS) FLYING FROM THAT?

*Author's Note: Look out for the lessons to be learned from this as marked **

I had a Farm strip in Suffolk: 450 metres by 20 metres; "dry and well mown". Each year I invited friends (mainly lawyer pilots) to come to my place for a summer barbecue. My preparation included reasonable Liability Insurance cover as the landowner*, sending to each pilot intending to arrive an Information Sheet with a diagram of the strip's location, details of orientation, characteristics, hazards, and advice.* It also included the following:

"Please note that the maximum length is 500 yards, and if you, your aircraft or your experience are not up to short strips, you should consider our alternate, Elmsett, which is 5nm away to the ENE. A shuttle service will be provided to Harvest Farm". (AAIB Bulletin EW/G92/08/17)

The August morning looked promising for the fly-in . The barbecue, straw bales, sunshades and garden seats were all set out around the apple trees, and just outside the hangar doors – in case of a shower later. The arrivals were awaited.

One of the pilots expected had not been on the original invitation list. He had heard of my fly-in and invited himself. I didn't know him, but he was known to other guests. So, I accepted him, and sent him all the details as sent to all other pilots.

The party started and seemed to be enjoyed by all. I undertook two ferry flights to Elmsett to collect pilots who preferred not to use my airstrip. My Reims Rocket (G-LOYA) was adept at short field operations with a couple of passengers, and half tanks. In between these flights the aircraft was parked on the apron outside the hangar. Other aircraft were parked along the strip, with rear overhang over the adjacent field.

Early on, the handheld radio sprung into life, operated by one of my suitably qualified guests. This brief conversation took place:

Visitor: I think I am over the strip now: Guest: Oh ! We can't see you. Which way does the strip face ?" Visitor: I think it's North/South". Guest: Well, you should be looking for one running East/West. You're probably 2 miles north of where we are." Visitor: "Oh, alright, just a minute. . . . . Ah yes, I can see it now".

This was a worrying indication of someone who hadn't absorbed the Information sheet properly *. The Condor landed. His parking technique also raised some eyebrows. He and his girlfriend joined the party.

Sometime during the afternoon, the Condor pilot approached me asking if he could take one of my non-flying guests for a quick flight. In the course of agreeing - with some apprehension – I took the opportunity to brief him in more detail. He did need to start at the extreme easterly end of the runway; he did need to ensure he had sufficient flying speed; he did need to focus on the speed, and not the approaching apple trees, my aircraft, nor the many guests enjoying themselves. Off he went with one of my best clients.

We watched him prepare for take-off. We heard his engine checks. So far so good. We watched the Condor coming along the runway. We saw the tailwheel lift off. But then. . . . . the tailwheel went down again, while the aircraft continued towards us. I stopped focussing my video camera on the Condor at that stage, and with most others, moved quickly towards the safety of the hangar to take cover.

There was then a sequence of unpleasant hardware destruction sounds, followed by a loud scream. I grabbed the fire extinguisher, fearing the next likely development, and went outside, waiting for more distressing sounds. All I heard was a shout: "Well, get the f…. out, then". The scene around me was distressing enough, and there was a little girl (the passenger's daughter) who needed a lot of comforting after screaming for her Dad.

In retrospect, the sequence appeared to have been as follows: The pilot did not have enough flying speed, and was trying to lift off too soon *. He got airborne to about eye height only. His right wing struck the right wing of my parked Reims Rocket. Bang One. The Condor continued forward until its left wing struck one of the apple trees tearing the wing off. Bang Two. What was then resembling a badly finished Link Trainer, finally hit the ground about three feet from the edge of the swimming pool, and twenty feet short of the shed with the jacuzzi gas cylinders. Bang Three.

The two gull wing doors on the Condor opened, and the pilot, and the little girl's Dad climbed safely and quickly out – as instructed by the pilot. Being a wood and fabric aircraft, the impacts caused a good deal of airborne splinters flying around. This miraculously resulted in the only casualty. A lady guest had the misfortune to be hit by some flying debris from both my aircraft, and the Condor. We drove her to Casualty where the offending items were removed and she was given some stitches. It could have been so much worse... Mercifully, there was nothing worse apart from one totally written off Condor (which its unfortunate owner had spent a year restoring before renting it out) and half a right wing and a very distorted main cockpit area on my beloved Cessna. After extensive, expensive and very time-consuming repairs, requiring a jig to be constructed so as to remake the "cockpit cage", the aircraft flew 8kts faster after the work !

Some quotes from the AAIB Bulletin on the accident, give us some useful lessons:

Along the runway after the tailwheel went down: "the pilot assessed that there was insufficient runway remaining in which to





abandon the take off and stop the aircraft.

The aircraft became airborne before the end of the runway but failed to gain sufficient height to avoid colliding with the Cessna

The best available performance data for the Condor indicates that under the conditions prevailing at the time, it should have required less than 365 metres to reach a height of 50ft agl – i.e. well above the apple trees!*

Lessons which I learned from this:

I was very glad to have Insurance cover. Buy as much as you can afford – and them some more through a good broker.

Make sure your note to pilots about your airstrip is comprehensive, detailed, and clear, and is sent to each pilot attending.

Don't be shy about asking each pilot to sign a note confirming he has read the airfield details, and agrees with them, and (by suitable wording) that he will indemnify you as airstrip owner if he or his aircraft cause any loss or damage as a result of visiting you. Just because it's social and free doesn't mean you can't become liable. Passengers as well as other visitors' claims can be very expensive.

Consider getting adequate details from each pilot about his flying qualifications, and experience especially on type and small grass strips (if applicable). The pilot referred to above had total time of 91 hours with only 11 on type.

Don't be reluctant to ask a pilot to turn back or go elsewhere if you become concerned about his/her airmanship at any stage.

I conclude with the classic question from this pilot's girlfriend, after everyone had gone home from the party (anonymity preserved): "Oh, Charlie, how are we going to get home !"

Experienced, photographed and recounted by Tim Scorer. 28th November 2023.

I Learnt about Flying From These – Part 2

Finally, a much less hectic situation, from which another lesson was learned. January 22nd 2022 brought a slightly murky morning, though the prospect of the Flying Farmers' pop-in event at Wellesbourne, with accompanying hearty breakfast, gave something to look forward to. Frequently, Richard Howard very kindly allows me to join him in his lovely Vans RV-6 for some of the longer distance FFA trips, where my 120 would seem rather more pedestrian. So, to repay the favour, this time I'd fly Richard in my 120 and he could enjoy a day out with a wing above him, for a change. The route was very familiar to me, however, picking Richard up had meant my track south was actually slightly further West than it would have been if coming from my own strip, at Temple Bruer.

Blissfully on our way, up at 2,500ft deep in conversation, I suddenly realised I was inside a section of East Midlands' CTA that had a base of 1,500ft ! Immediately, I turned left to exit the airspace, pulled the power and began descending immediately and called East Midlands to tell them what I was doing and why. As is my usual practice when transiting close to any controlled airspace, I was using their Frequency Monitoring Code (listening-squawk) and monitoring their radar frequency, which I believe was my saving grace. Upon admitting my error to ATC, the lady controller graciously responded with a simple thank you for owning up and offer to resume my own navigation to Wellesbourne. The point became amusing upon joining the throng at Wellesbourne, when Winston Lee mentioned that on his flight down from Sherburn, he'd heard someone confess on EMA ATC to being in the wrong place at the wrong height and that the pilot had got away with it, to which I put my hand up and said…

Yes, that was me - lesson learned, ***own up if you've cocked up*** !

©Graham Robson July 2023



What a dangerous challenge to accept

Over the years I have built four homebuilt aircraft. A Twinstar (a bit like an Optica) to take my late father flying after his stroke; a monowheel Europa (kit 40), an RV6 (which later twice won the King's cup) and finally a delightfully docile Eurostar, which I still fly. I enjoyed engine failures in all of them except the Twinstar which sadly was written off shortly after the purchaser flew it home. In the last 60 years of flying mainly 'experimental' aircraft I have had 17 engine failures and precautionary landings. One of which was definitely my fault because frozen after six hours in a flexwing, I switched onto an empty tank. Ouch!

I'm fortunate to live reasonably close to Mona airfield in Anglesey which having an 1500m long runway, and with very little traffic at the weekends, allows one to practice a variety of (unprintable here) emergencies - without anyone calling the emergency services. This along with the excellent training I received from Paul Smith at Sywell in the long-ago has resulted in my being around to write this today! Of my 17 incidents the following is possibly the most relevant to your question 'what did I learn about flying from that…'

Checking my logbook I see that on the 14th May 1997 I flew my Europa to Wittering to join friends and fellow members of the Air Squadron. Part business, part pleasure, and after two days it was time for all of us to leave. The cloud base was very low (300ft) and above my pay-grade as I would be returning home to the West coast of Wales. I could not do it. As everyone departed my friends exhorted me to leave so that the base could be closed for the weekend. If I stayed the base would have to be kept open and a security detail would miss the weekend with their families. Very embarrassed I dug my toes in and refused to fly. At the crucial moment with several of my friends urging me to at least fly to Peterborough the station commander Boggie Moran appeared and said 'I tell my lads it takes more courage to say No than to Go, so you stay as long as you like'. I slunk back to my nissen hut and watched everyone disappear almost immediately up into the solid overcast. I was not the most popular man on the station that weekend and as soon as I could I took off and headed for home.

The 8/8ths cloud base was rock solid over England at around 1000ft all the way to the Welsh hills. I stopped for a coffee at Welshpool and so that I could ring ahead for the weather at home, in case I would have to let down out over the coast. I was told that it was clear out to sea with our nearest hill of 700ft just below the cloud base. Thus reassured I departed Welshpool for Talybont.

There is an unpronounceable town in mid-Wales that gives British Rail train announcers difficulties, called Machynlleth. A real tongue-twister, as are the plethora of small paddocks surrounding the town. With a cloud base at a max. 1100 feet the cockpit suddenly and unexpectedly filled with a dense acrid smoke. My eyes felt as if they were being fried. I could only just make out the panel but I did not dare jettison the canopy in case the additional airflow fanned the fire coming up from the footwell. It later transpired that the alternator had seized and its belt was well and truly alight. A problem but not life threatening.

Engine off, the air cleared. The only flat land available was the Dovey river, and then miraculously a flood meadow with an arrestor wire livestock fence at the far end. All went well and, as this was the seventh emergency landing I'd had in that Subaru powered Europa, I was well prepared. I had a short roll of electric fence wire, string, insulators and battery unit to keep the store cattle in the field from licking my pride and joy to death. A mate (Stumpy Stoner – Red1 – what a friend) flew up the next day with an alternator and spare belt and I flew her home.

What did I learn? I learnt that even when our peer group make us feel a heel, and a great many people are caused a lot of inconvenience, we are still personally responsible for our decisions. When I got home I rang David Corbett who had been with me at Wittering and who had flown back to Shobdon on the Friday. Apparently it had taken the three of them (all pilots) several attempts to let down through the clag and they counted themselves fortunate to have made it in one piece. So did I….

I thought back to my early training many years before when I had told my instructor Paul Smith that I was giving up flying because I couldn't hack it. He asked me four questions …'What would you do if you got lost? If you lost oil pressure? Had a rough-running engine? Or the weather closed in on you? When I replied to each of his questions 'Well I'd land of course' He replied 'Well then you'll make a pilot one day.' Thanks Paul.

Bill Williams-Wynne (149)

2024 Renewal - FLYING FARMERS – PRICING MATRIX

SECTION 1 and 3 – PREMISES and PRODUCTS LIABILITY
Limit of Liability (any one occurrence and in the aggregate in respect of Products Liability)

Annual Movements of Third Party Aircraft (see INFO in the last year renewal schedule)	**GBP500,000**	**GBP1,000,000**	**GBP2,000,000**	**GBP5,000,000**
Up 100	GBP470.00	GBP660.00	GBP780.00	GBP1,320.00
more than 100 up to 250	GBP530.00	GBP730.00	GBP840.00	GBP1,440.00
more than 250 up to 500	GBP595.00	GBP790.00	GBP900.00	GBP1,560.00
more than 500 up to 1,000	GBP790.00	GBP990.00	GBP1,080.00	GBP1,740.00
more than 1,000 up to 2,000	GBP925.00	GBP1,120.00	GBP1,200.00	GBP1,860.00
More than 2,000 to be agreed by slip leader	to be agreed by slip leader			

SECTION 2 – HANGARKEEPERS LIABILITY
Plus GBP235.00 for GBP500,000 any one occurrence, but limited to GBP75,000 any one aircraft.
Plus GBP470.00 for GBP1,000,000 any one occurrence, but limited to GBP75,000 any one aircraft.
Minimum premium in respect of mid term additions GBP175.00 in full, subject to AVN9A (applicable to the movements/limit banding).

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

Nb: members might already be covered under their farm Public Liability insurance. PLEASE CHECK!

FLYING FARMERS ASSOCIATION

FFA Clothing

Item	Logo	Sizes	Price
New Style Jackets		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
Baseball Caps			£8.00
Ties			£15.00
Umbrellas (only one left)			£29.00
Clocks			£30.00
Pens			£2.50
Summer Jackets (NEW)			£65

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**

The price of FFA New Style jackets has risen considerably and once the current stock has run out the new price will be £85.00 plus postage and packing.



NEW
Summer Jacket with fold away hood



FLYING FARMERS ASSOCIATION

NEW FFA name badges

£3.00 each plus £1.50 postage and packing.





To order please email: charliepapworth@gmail.com with the name you would like on your badge and the address if you require it to be posted.



Programme 2024



During 2022-2023 we had a number of the very popular Pop-ins, and more are planned for this coming winter. As I am sure you will have seen in the Newsletters, we have had another good year for "Events" including another overseas Tour.

Looking ahead to next year, we have a full calender of events. A brief summary of these events is below. The Tour for next year has been put together by over 15 Members celebrating the 50th Year of the Flying Farmers.

The Committee and I would like to thank all the organisers for making these meetings possible, also for those that have attended, in some cases having to drive 2-3 hours to get to that event, some times we are called the Driving Farmers not the Flying Farmers!!

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)

Neville Stops

Events 2024

- *TBC, 27th March* (provisional Date) – **The Royal Hospital Chelsea** – London
- 25th April 2024 – **The Isle of Sheppey**
- 2nd May 2024* – **Our chance to become a Freeminer for the day** – Forest of Dean
- 8th May 2024* – **Lasham Gliders** – Lasham
- 15th May2024* – **RAF Valley** – Holyhead
- 24 May–7the June 2024 – **FFA's 2024 Study Tour, to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Association (Closing Date, 31st Dec)**
- 19th June 2024* – **Miserden Estate** – Stroud
- 26th June 2024* – **Fairline Boats** – Ipswich
- 03rd July 2024* – **Denjie** – Sounthminster, Essex
- Late July/August 2024* – ***Bright Seeds** - Salisbury

***Please note that some of these dates may change but will be updated on the website.**

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.

Pop-Ins 2024. For all Pop-ins (unless otherwise announced) the intention is to meet at 12.00pm for lunch.

- Friday 8th December 2023 – **Turweston (11am –3pm)**

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).

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.

Eventbrite

When you book a place please fill in all sections, even if you put N/A. If coming by car, put this in under A/C, and the Reg under A/C reg. If you do not fill in all sections Eventbrite will not accept the booking.

If you are thinking of organising an event please contact either Gordon or Neville and we will send you the updated "Guide for Events Organisers".
Event Information: Joining instructions and attendee lists will go on the web site under that event.

Booking note: When booking on the home page next to general admission there is a drop down menu, please select how many people you are bringing.

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.

The Royal Hospital, Chelsea, London, 27th March 2024 (Provisional date TBC)

The Royal Hospital is a unique blend of national heritage, royal patronage and military tradition, forged over 330 years, whose model of care and well-being for ordinary soldiers remains as central to its purpose as when first conceived, and whose influence on the history of Chelsea is profound.

The tour tells the story of the 330-year history of the Hospital, taking in the splendour of the Grade I and II listed buildings, inclusive of artistic masterpieces. The tour will bring to life the long-standing ambassadorial role of the Chelsea Pensioners, inclusive of anecdotal personal stories of their time at the Hospital.

Tours are 90 minutes in duration, followed by 30 minutes for the Museum and Gift Shop. The tour route takes groups across the length of the site to visit its main attractions including The Great Hall, Chapel and Figure Court.

The site of the Royal Hospital Chelsea is 66 acres and although the tours do not cover all of this, the tour does involve a large amount of walking. There are 10 steps up to both the Chapel and Great Hall, both of which are fitted with wheelchair lifts.

Note from Hospital: *Please make us aware of any access needs your group members have so we can help to facilitate the tour. Please let a member of security know if you require use of the wheelchair lift. Motorised buggies are not permitted on the wheelchair lift. We are first and foremost a residence so please be respectful when walking around the site. Areas that are not accessible to the public are clearly signposted as residents and staff only.*

Nb: The 27th March is a provisional Date, as we are unable to Book our Tour with the Royal Hospital until the 27th December 2023

Isle of Sheppey, 25th April 2024

The plan is to arrive by 10.30, be picked up promptly by the classic old London bus, then to be driven to the museum which is conveniently close to the restaurant.

The curator Mr Peter West will give us a short talk on the importance Sheppey played in the Battle of Britain and to learn about the early aviator's. Then we will have a tour around the island.

A buffet lunch has been booked in the Queen Phillippa hotel at 1 o'clock. Then onto the farm visit at The Burden Brothers at Old Rides Farm. Should be finished at around 4pm.

The grass airstrip on the island is privately owned, it is some 600yds long, and well maintained. There will be a £5 landing fee.

Nb: This Tour is limited to 15 aircraft.

Pop-Ins, 28th October & 18th November

Over the past few years, I have been surprised that we have been blessed with quite good flying weather for most of the winter Pop-In events that have been organised. However, this year, that has changed. Neville and I decided to cancel both the events that we had arranged following the invitation of Chris Reynolds to go to his strip at Pent Farm, Kent on October 28th and the event planned to go to Tollerton, Nottingham on November 18th.

The decision to cancel an event is not made lightly and every time it is done with a very heavy heart. The few days before the Pent Farm visit Southern England had had some of the heaviest rainfall in recent memory, leaving the grass strip very wet, but still just usable. However, further rain was forecast before the event, with thunderstorms forecast for the day of the event. So, we made the decision to cancel. Likewise, the weather forecast for our Tollerton event was for heavy rain and strong winds throughout the day. In the event the rain came through a little earlier than forecast and the winds were certainly less strong than forecast, but the morning was certainly not flyable for most of Southern England. Added to this, many of our strips were unusable, so the decision to cancel was not difficult to make.

The necessity for event organisers to contact participants at relatively short notice, for example in the event of the cancellation, does demonstrate the value of the Eventbrite software. If all event participants are signed in, organisers can contact all concerned with one e-mail. If you are not signed in, you may miss some vital piece of information.

We hope for better weather on Friday 8th December when we hope to meet at Turweston. If my strip remains waterlogged, I intend to drive, so I look forward to seeing many of you then!

David Keene.



Tollerton weather on the day

Round Britain Anniversary Tour

As you will all know by now, next year is the 50th anniversary of our Flying Farmers Association. It has grown from the seed of an idea back in 1973 by half a dozen farmers with their own aircraft who decided to have a meeting at the then drainage demonstration at Coventry. The idea was to assess the feasibility of creating a group of farming/flyers to use their aircraft to go to interesting venues, and it has developed into the mighty oak that it now is with over 420 members that have been to every country in Europe on tour visiting a massive range of interesting venues, both agricultural and cultural.

These annual tours - along with very many one day events - are incredibly popular and very often over-subscribed, endorsing their popularity. Unusually for an organisation such as ours, every event is arranged within the membership by the members themselves who mostly come up with their own ideas for a visit or an event.

The Association is a massive success story, and a great credit to your committees, both past and present.

You should all know by now that this year's event is to be a celebratory Round Britain tour to give as many people as possible the opportunity to join in on a 'dip-in dip-out' basis, or to join the whole tour, depending upon their desire, availability and budget. Participation can of course be by plane or by car.

It is the brainchild of our Events Secretary, Neville Stops, who has put in a massive amount of work behind the scenes to coordinate all the details - but it could not have come to fruition without the many willing members who have agreed to host the various legs of the tour in so many parts of the U.K.

The closing date for these legs, by the necessity of hotel availability, should have passed by the time that you read this newsletter, HOWEVER all the venue hosts have agreed to extend the closing date to the end of the year to give anyone who may yet be undecided, to finally add their names to the participant lists. You are urged to make a big effort to join in this special anniversary year tour for as many legs as you feel able to. There are still places available and all the details and costings are well laid out on the website under the 'Events' tab.

The final dinner in Harrogate is to be a very special occasion to commemorate our Association's anniversary and so you are particularly urged to make a big effort to join your fellow members at this dinner.

For those still undecided, please try to get your applications in before Christmas. It will be all too easy to let the festivities get in the way before the final closing date of December 31st.

Martin Gosling

FFA's 2024 Study Tour
To celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Association

Event 1.	**Friday 24th May**	**RAF Waddington – SOLD OUT**
Event 2.	**Saturday 25th May**	**BBQ at Paul and Roz Stephen's farm, Suffolk**
Event3.	**Saturday 25th & Sunday 26th May**	**Cumbernauld**
Event 4.	**Monday 27th & Tuesday 28th May**	**Perth**
Event 5.	**Wednesday 29th May**	**Stafford County Show**
Event 6.	**Thursday 30th May**	**Shobdon for Lunch, and then fly on to Bodmin**
Event 7.	**Friday 31st & Saturday 1st June**	**Cornwall**
Event 8.	**Sunday 2nd June**	**Isle of Wight**
Event 9.	**Tuesday 4th June**	**Depart I.O.W, fly to Andrew Cragg's for a Coffee break, Kent**
Event 10.	**Tuesday 4th June**	**Martin Gosling / Charles Course, Stones Farm, Essex**
Event 11.	**Thursday 6th June**	**End of Tour Dinner, this dinner is open to all members**
Event 12.	**Friday 7th June**	**A Visit to Taylor's Tea & Coffee factory in Harrogate**

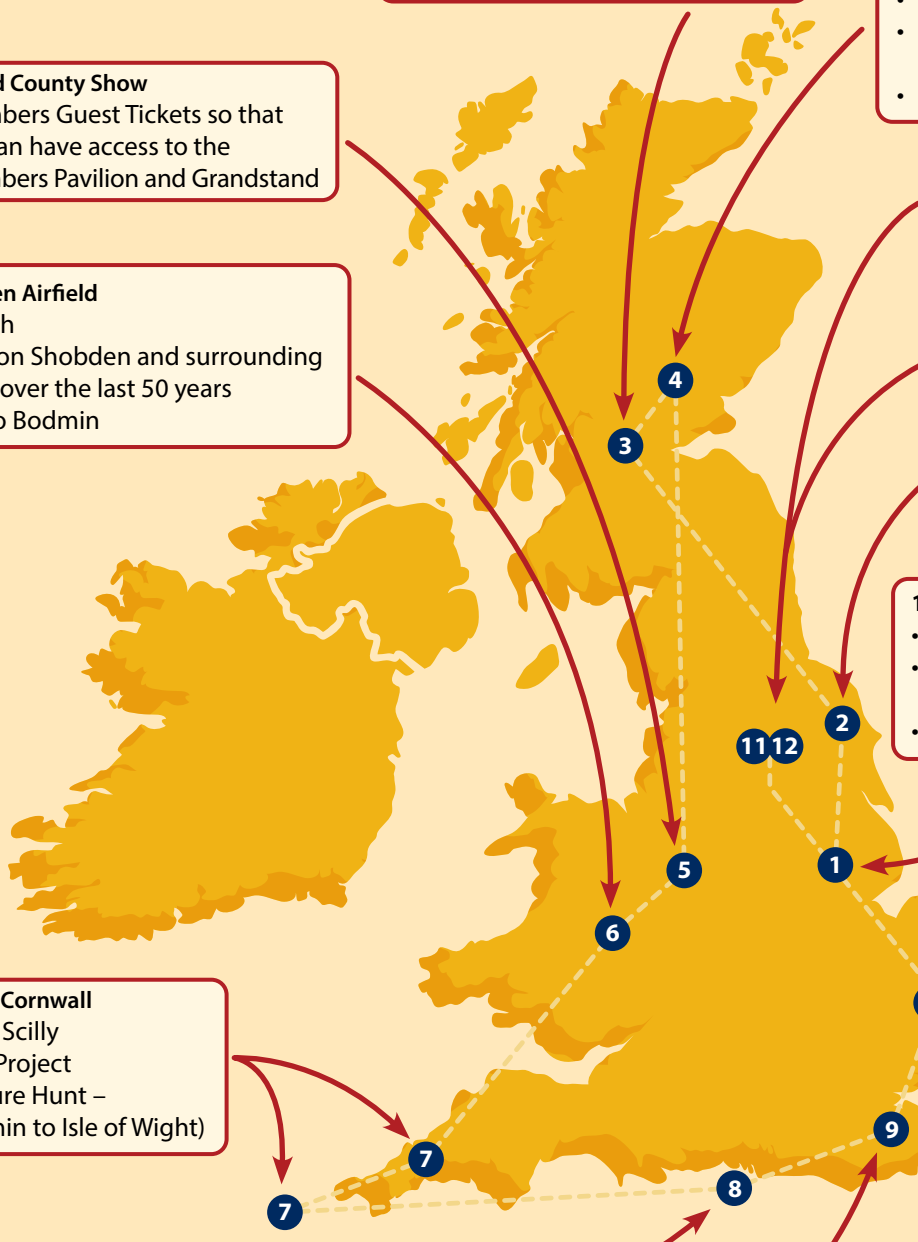
Grand Dinner

Thursday 6th June 2023

Hotel Du Vin Harrogate

Bed and breakfast
Champagne reception, dinner (including half bottle wine)
Coach transfer from Sherburn airfield to Harrogate on the 6th June.
£200 per person
If single occupancy of room
£260 per person.

Dont miss out!
Event Closing Date 31st December



3. Cumbernauld
- Glasgow Museum of Transport
- Burrell Collection

4. Perth
- Blair Athol Hydro Electric
- Lunch at Bruar Falls (Harrods of the North)
- Blair Castle

5. Stafford County Show
- Members Guest Tickets so that we can have access to the Members Pavilion and Grandstand

12. Harrogate
- Taylor's Tea & Coffee factory

6. Shobden Airfield
- Lunch
- Talk on Shobden and surrounding area over the last 50 years
- Fly to Bodmin

11. Harrogate
- ★Grand Dinner★

2. Paul and Roz, North Yorks
BBQ

1. RAF Waddington – SOLD OUT
- Red Arrows
- Air Battlespace Training Centre
- Vulcan restoration project

7. Bodmin, Cornwall
- Isle of Scilly
- Eden Project
- Treasure Hunt – (Bodmin to Isle of Wight)

8. Isle of Wight
- Treasure Hunt – (Bodmin to Isle of Wight)
- Osborne House visit
- Boat Tour of War Ships

9. Andrew Cragg, Kent
- WW2 Advanced Landing Ground memorial and History windows

10. Martin Gosling/Charles Course, Stones Farm, Essex
- Hawker Restorations
- Lazer shooting
- Hedingham Castle
- Bulmer Brick and Tile
- Maldons Brewery

Please note, this is a draft progremme with some visits still in the planning stages

AGM Meeting 27th September 2023







A couple of years ago, we shifted the AGM meeting from mid/late October to late September to take advantage of some early Autumn weather rather than the more unreliable late October conditions. Unfortunately it didn't work this year and only a handful of aircraft braved the pessimistic forecasts of poor visibility in the south and strong winds and weather warnings in the north. However, most put in a big effort, taking to their cars. In the end we had about 50 out of the 72 members booked in, managing to get to the meeting at Old Warden - a fitting venue for some ancient but well maintained members to see the ancient but well maintained aircraft of the Shuttleworth Collection at Old Warden.

The agenda for the meeting shifted slightly as the five Border Force officers (reduced to three on the day due to COVID), asked to have their presentation brought forward, as one of them had to buzz off for an afternoon engagement. It was an interesting talk illustrated with photographs of a number of drug smuggling examples. One was a 360 excavator, it's arm stuffed with packets of drugs and many aircraft which had been caught red handed carrying millions of pounds worth of white powder. But of course, no one knows, as with illegal immigration, what percentage slip through unnoticed.

The speaker urged strip owners to look out for unusual activities on their strips, such as movements at night, packages being dropped, someone flying a drone close by, items being handled suspiciously etc etc. This is called Project Pegasus by Border Force.

Another subject discussed was the requirement from 1st January 2024 to have a Certificate of Agreement if you want to make your first landing at your strip when returning from abroad. Two of the Officers stayed on over lunchtime to discuss matters with the attendees. One question raised was about a code for your airfield instead of using ZZZZ. The Border Force are working on 4 letter codes for airstrips with the Certificates, which in time could be adopted for use on flight plans without having to obtain an ICAO code. Time will tell.



The fact that we had invited Border Force to attend the meeting and the response they received from the floor certainly brought the Force and the FFA closer together, which they appreciated – a pledge that the FFA took when first formed was that we should form good relationships with these authorities.





Lunch was a buffet affair which went down well before resuming the business part of the AGM itself. The Minutes are published elsewhere in this newsletter.

Our second speaker was Scott Butler, who is cleared to fly most of the aircraft of the Shuttleworh Collection. His day job is as a BA pilot. He started with a bit of history about the Collection. Richard Shuttleworth inherited the Shuttleworth fortune in 1932 - his father was a wealthy agricultural engineer. The inheritance funded his interests as he became a successful racing driver and aviator who had a passion for anything mechanical. He started a collection of cars and aircraft which formed the nucleus of the Shuttleworth Collection. He lost his life in 1940 when his Fairey Battle light bomber crashed into a hill near Wallingford on a cross country exercise aged 31.

His mother continued to add to the collection before handing it over to the Richard Ormonde Shuttleworth Remembrance Trust in 1944.

The Collection now has 59 aircraft, 39 of which are currently airworthy. Plus many other veteran vehicles capable of being driven, taking part in parades and participating in events.

Scott went on to tell us about the idiosyncrasies of the different types he flies at Old Warden. He flies to show off the aircraft to the crowd rather than showing off his own skills. All the same, these aircraft require very special skills and necessitate proficiency checks with the Chief Pilot. He gains knowledge about the various aircraft by talking with other pilots who are experienced on the type regarding the controls, studying the handling notes and talking with the engineers about them.

The meeting was closed around 15:30, leaving an hour and a half to view the Collection with the free pass handed out when we arrived. Many thanks to Neville for arranging the meeting in a most efficient manner.

Paul Stephens







Opposite page.
Main picture; The Shuttleworth building, **Lower Left;** Border Force officer talk. **Lower Right;** The AGM, the main business part of the day (Left, Paul Stephens; Right, Andrew Cragg). **Bottom Right;** Scott Butler gave a talk about the Shuttleworth Collection

This Page.
Clockwise from top left; 1909 Bleriot XI the worlds oldest flying aeroplane, Bill Boutcher-West with some of the historic bikes, Alf Oliver and Tony Fisher viewing the 1917 Bristol F.2b fighter, Tiger Moths, 1936 Percival Mew Gull in front of the 1924 DH88 Comet.

The Life and Times of Channel Islands Air Search – by Roger Dadd



Above: left to right David keys, Jeremy Ozanne, Roger Dadd, Andy Blake.

Created in the Island of Guernsey in the Channel Islands in 1980, the first iteration of Channel Islands Air Search was as "Guernsey Air Search". It was a part-time airborne search and rescue organisation born out of Guernsey Airlines, of which I was the Managing Director and also a pilot.

I have been asked by David Hugo of our supporters' organisation to record, as its Founder, a note of the history of this purely voluntary organisation before the passage of time precludes it. To those whom I have not mentioned by name, my apologies, and I also confirm that any errors and omissions are mine alone. This is a note of my personal recollections and does not in any way purport to be the views of the organisation Channel Islands Air Search.

The Beginning

My own career in civil aviation began as a cadet sponsored by British Midland Airways, being trained as a pilot at the London School of Flying, Elstree between 1965 and 1967. Thereafter, I became a pilot flying Viscount and

BAC1-11 aircraft until, in 1972, I became part of a newly-formed airline, Alidair, flying Viscount aircraft within the UK and Europe, with scheduled air services between East Midlands, Edinburgh and Aberdeen and with services abroad to Copenhagen and Brussels. With the arrival of the North Sea Oil Industry, we created a Scottish arm, serving major oil companies between Aberdeen and the Shetland Isles, moving oil rig workers to Sumburgh, from whence they were helicoptered to their rigs.

I had long held a fondness for Guernsey, and strongly believed that the Island would benefit from having a dedicated airline bearing the Island's name, colours and crest, with a primary focus on serving the community and visitors to it. Thus, in 1975, Guernsey Airlines was created and went on to establish its own air services to Manchester and London (Gatwick) airports, with further seasonal routes to various destinations such as Gloucester and Cambridge, with the objective of fostering direct links for tourism.

By 1979, I and my colleagues had become aware of the need for an all-weather airborne search and rescue service which could respond at a moment's notice, at any time, to assist with the location of vessels in distress or persons in peril. This, then, was the genesis of what in 1982 became a full-time dedicated pan-Channel Island service, known locally as "the Lifeboat's eyes in the sky".

In those early days, we were greatly assisted by many people, both inside of government and from within the community. Our original Piper Aztec aircraft (GBBWM) eventually became totally dedicated to the search and rescue role and was equipped with various search aids, such as marine radar (something of a first but what else do you really need when flying over the sea as low as two hundred feet?), marine radio, deployable smoke markers and suchlike.

The original crew of February 1980 included Captain Andy Blake, a former RAF Shackleton and Nimrod pilot, who acted as Chief Pilot, David Keys, a

former Fleet Air Arm fast jet navigator, who acted as our Senior Navigator (Search Director), Max Trouteaud and Jeremy Ozanne, who had been volunteered as an Observer by his father, the late Conseilleur Richard Ozanne, with myself as a pilot and Chief Officer. All the original crew came from within Guernsey Airlines but this was rapidly expanded to include crew members from other walks of life.

In starting up the operation, which was run from a small disused wartime building at Guernsey Airport, with little more than a kettle and telephone, now superseded by a purpose-built hangar on ground provided to us by the States of Guernsey at a peppercorn rent. I was greatly assisted by the then Harbour Master of Guernsey, Captain John Petit, MBE who, as had his father before him, had been awarded gallantry medals by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution in their roles as successive Coxswains of the St Peter Port Lifeboat. Under his quiet and friendly guidance, we were able to adopt many of the practices and much of the ethos of that venerable institution.

By 1982, the concept of a quick reaction search aircraft had been established, and the aircraft had to be bought out of the airline. In this, we were strongly supported by two stalwarts of the Guernsey Boat Owners Association, John Torode and Ian Larby, both of whom became original Trustees of the charitable trust which the now re-named Channel Islands Air Search had become. Fellow Trustees from Guernsey included Edward Fattorini and Peter Bachman, whilst from Jersey a number of prominent businessmen, such as Don Filleuil, Phil Rondel, Derek Short and, latterly, two successive Jersey Harbour Masters, Jurat Roy Bullen and Captain Brian Nibbs, also served. Their Excellencies the Lieutenant-Governors of both Jersey and Guernsey agreed to serve as Joint Patrons of the Service, which their successors do to this day. Without exception, they have been entirely supportive and very encouraging. The fact that the Chief Officer of Airsearch may have access to the knowledge and wisdom of the former Chief Officer of the Royal Air Force is a great privilege and never taken for granted! We were fortunate to receive guidance from the likes of N M Rothschild's Bank and such persons as Sir de Vic Carey, then a Law Officer of the Crown and a keen aviator.

Initial funding for the aircraft came predominantly from the Lions' International Clubs and, to this day, our aircraft bears their logo and the name "Lions' Pride".

And thus it was that the Service became recognised as a useful asset by the Coastguards of both Bailiwicks and also those situated at nearby Cherbourg and Brest. Work has always only been performed in direct response to a request made by any of those agencies via the Harbour Office at Guernsey. Something approaching one-half of callouts can be originated by the French authorities, with no charge for this service being made. It was always understood that this facility was offered as a quid pro quo for the provision by the French of their own lifeboats, helicopters and warships, if so requested by the Channel Island authorities.

Little has changed during our forty-three years of service to date. We have a response to a callout, night or day, aimed at achieving a full crew with engines started within twenty-five minutes. Of course, there have been some changes: the Piper Aztec was replaced by a low-hours Islander sourced from Orange County (John Wayne) Airport, USA, with the



Below: left to right Roger Dadd, Peter Bougeard, Jeremy Ozanne, Andy Blake, Keith Read.

assistance of Britten-Norman, builders of the aircraft, with whom we have had a relationship which lasts to this day.

That aircraft (G-CIAS) remained with us for twenty years and gave us the scope to introduce Thermal Imaging (Forward-Looking Infra Red) capability for heat sensing location in daylight and darkness, homing, "Sky Shout" loudhailer, air droppable life-raft and such like.

On 3 November 2013, we lost this aircraft when inadvertent fuel mismanagement saw the aircraft forced to land at the Devil's Hole on the north coast of Jersey on a wild and dirty night during a search for a vessel in distress to the north of Jersey. Fortunately, none of the five crew on board suffered physical injury.

We then had to embark upon a replacement programme for the aircraft. The Trustees, ever willing to turn misfortune into something positive, contracted with Britten-Norman for the building of a new aircraft and designated me, now retired as a pilot and Chief Officer, to lead the aircraft procurement team. My successor as Chief Officer, formerly Commander Colin Ferbrache, OBE, RN (Ret'd) had a full-time day job in the finance industry, and could not devote the time necessary to this task, which involved the design and equipping of the aircraft and arrangements for interim leased aircraft from the manufacturer, pending an initial contractual period of eighteen months which grew to be no less than five years!

Although I am slightly surprised to find myself still married to my forbearing wife, Mary, the end result was probably a leading edge civilian search and rescue aircraft in which the cost of its special equipment equalled the £1.25 million cost of the basic aircraft at 2014 prices.

Our new aircraft (N-70AS) was transferred to the American Aircraft Register which, whilst in no way less rigorous than other aircraft registries, now permits us to undertake substantially the whole of our maintenance in our own purpose-built hangar at Guernsey Airport.

That, then, is the sequence of events which sees us where we are today. Airsearch (as it is known locally) is unique and is, as far as we know, the only fully voluntarily crewed and charitably run organisation of its type in the world, whilst we have provided assistance to both Finland and the USA authorities, and have been charged with assisting a South American country to set up a similar organisation, all of which are government-assisted. In 2004, we were somewhat taken aback to receive the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

Interestingly, Airsearch is unusual in being one of the few truly pan-Channel Island charities, which has proved that inter-Island rivalries can so easily be set aside when there is a cause to be served and a will to do it. Funding for the provision of our services to the various agencies, such as Coastguard, Police and Fire Service, comes almost exclusively from the pockets of Channel Islanders.

We have three rules which have been with us from the very beginning;

- We never seek donations from those to whom we have provided a service
- We never make any public comment which may be construed as being critical of those whom we have served.
- We will never claim salvage from owners of a vessel which we have found or otherwise assisted in saving

The reason for all of these is not altruistic but to encourage the earliest call for assistance.

Over the years, the crew members have changed, but my own twenty-eight years of service is by no means unique. We have had mariners, air traffic



Left: Roger Dadd flying over the harbour to open a Battle of Britain Air Display.

controllers, fire-fighters, hoteliers, garage owners, accountants, lawyers and builders. A former Observer of fourteen years' service was a parish priest in Guernsey, is now the Dean of Jersey and serves as a Trustee. Initially, the crew was all male, but the good grounding which female crew members bring to the Service was recognised early on, and such people as Deputy Yvonne Burford (Guernsey) and Jurat Sally Barber (now in Alderney) have served for several years as extremely capable pilots.

We have been supported by our own organisation, the Friends of Airsearch, who operate in all the Islands, and by other outside organisations without whom we could not support our aircraft and its operation or establish the reserves which any modern charity must maintain. These supporters are far too numerous to mention by name, but they will know who they are! It is they who make it possible for us to have flown well over the one thousand searches which we have operated in our forty-three years, and the saving of the many lives which we have helped our colleagues to achieve in what is the tight-knit community of search and rescue.

In preparing this note, I have been assisted by Mary, who has reminded me of two things: the first is that we are forever indebted to the employers of our crew members, who show great forbearance when one of their number disappears for an unknown period of time at less than a minute's notice.

My final thought must be with our partners and wives who, like those of any Lifeboat crew member, can be abandoned in a restaurant or at a function, be left to shift a newly-mixed pile of cement or have to worry on a stormy night, knowing that whilst the aircraft is cosseted and superbly suited to its task and its crew thoroughly trained and equipped, there is always the what if? factor…

Although it is more than fifteen years since I left the crew, on grounds of age, I will never forget my wife pulling a waterproof over her nightdress to get the car out of the garage and started with the green flashing light on top, and then coming back inside the house to pour me a glass of cold milk, trying



not to appear too anxious when she saw what I had interpreted about the state of the weather when I noted the falling trace on our barograph.

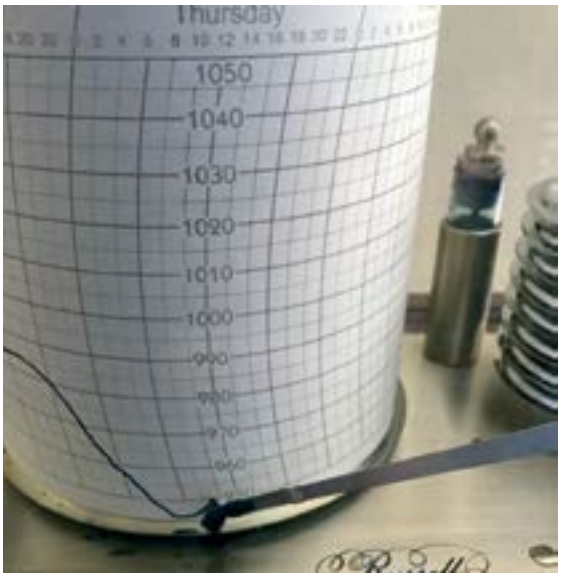
For myself, approaching my eightieth birthday and having recently ceased flying small aircraft, I am left with the knowledge that the Service is in the very safe and dedicated hands of its present Chief Officer, John Fitzgerald, and his team, our present Trustees and our supporters, with the expectation of many years of valuable service to come.

Perhaps my final contribution has been as the author of a series of (presently) four children's books centred on the cartoon character "Leo Seeker" (in reality, "Lions' Pride") with stories, some funny, some sad, based on our actual experiences within Airsearch. I do this under the pen-name of Simon Applegate and with the help of a small but very committed team. Two of these books are now published and generating funds for Airsearch, and two are written but awaiting illustration.

I wonder…will there be a fifth?

Roger Dadd

For anyone interested there is now a series of Children's books. www.blueormer.co.uk and the author will always add a a dedication for a named recipient, before posting.





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Bowser Wanted

Based up in the Highlands and am looking to purchase an Avgas bowser (Newhall Mains). I was wondering whether any FFA members have a second hand one they are looking to sell.

Please contact Euan Ramsay at ramsay.euan@googlemail.com

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A/F 1621 hrs • Eng 90 hrs Continental

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Email: robertthetent@hotmail.com



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Minutes of the 49th AGM Old Warden 27th September 2023

Committee Members Present: Martin Gosling (President), Paul Stephens (Hon. Chairman), Andrew Cragg (Hon. Treasurer & Membership Secretary), Neville Stops (Hon. Events Secretary), Giles Abrey (Newsletter Editor), Rick Holt & Rebecca Rayner. Roz Stephens took the minutes

	Description	Action
	The Chairman announced that the order for the day had changed due to one of the Border Force officers having to leave early. They were due to talk to the FFA after lunch so the AGM was delayed until after their presentation. **The meeting was opened by the Chairman at 12:02 hrs (local)**	
1	**Members Present** The President, The Committee as above, plus G. Robson, A Kedros, A. Oliver, R. Laming, G. Gibson, R. Culley, C. Moore, J. Milne, J. Thorold, W. Procter, T. Fisher, S. Goddard, T. Jarvis, P. Evans, R. Bell, G. Sly, D. Keene, R. Butler, W. Banks, W. Miazek, P. Gale, P. Burtwistle, C Elliott, W. Boutcher-West, G. Ferriman, C. Kirk, R. Everson, N. Edwards, P. Mailer, M. Cuttell, W Burton, R. Howard plus wives and partners respectively. The Chairman said he was touched by one apology for absence – Bob Beard, who had a stroke 5 years ago wished to be remembered to all his friends in the FFA.	
2	**Signing of the Minutes of the 48th AGM held at Belvoir Castle, 28th September 2022** The minutes were signed as a true and correct record.	
3	**Any Matters arising from the Minutes** There were no action points. There were no matters arising.	
4	**Chairman's Report** The Chairman said his job as FFA Chairman is to make sure the Association was running smoothly and that we are financially sound. This was made easy due to a good team of Committee members including Giles Abrey who is producing an excellent newsletter. The Chairman invited the Newsletter Editor at this point to thank the contributors to the newsletter without whom the publication would lack content. The Chairman continued to thank Neville Stops, our enthusiastic Events secretary and Andrew Cragg who dealt with the accounts and the membership database in a most efficient manner. He also thanked Andrew's PA, Emma Gorman for her work behind the scenes and also Andrew's political advice gleaned from his GAP representation. He also thanked Anthony Kedros for his representation at GAAC and Rick Holt at the GASCo meetings. Both indicated that they were retiring from these positions. Gerald Hackemar who also attends the GASCo meetings is willing to carry on representation and Rebecca Raynor will also attend.	
5	**Treasurer's Report** The Treasurer ran through the 2022/2023 accounts. He explained that we were gradually slipping into a loss situation mainly due to additional inflationary newsletter costs. He called for a proposal from the membership as to what level of increase in subscription would be appropriate. Roger Bell and Anthony Kedros both proposed it should be raised from £25 to £50 per annum, seconded by Alf Oliver. There was no objection from any of those present. The Treasurer explained that at present costs, this rise would give us a temporary surplus and keep us in the black for the next 10 years. The Chairman said this surplus would allow the Association to fully fund future AGMs and maintain the standard of the newsletter. ***There was then an hour's break for lunch***	AC
6	**Events Report** The Events Secretary went through the proposed events programme for 2024 and detailed the 2024 FFA 50th Anniversary Grand Tour. This will now be published on the FFA website and be open for entries shortly. He urged members to enrol for this round UK event asap to allow organisers a chance to book hotels, coaches etc.	NS
7	**Membership Report** The Membership Secretary showed Power Point graphs of the membership levels over the recent years. Presently there are 415 members. Another chart showed the analysis of surplus subscriptions being paid due to members not cancelling existing standing orders. Despite attempts to contact these people, he gets no response.	
8	**Election of Committee Members** It was the turn of A Cragg and N Stops to stand down. The former were both willing to stand again and were unanimously re-elected. R Holt had previously said he would stand down at the AGM. There was only one volunteer to replace him – Alf Oliver. There were no objections to him being elected. The Chairman thanked R Holt for his many years of being a Committee member, our GASCo representative and the seven years he was the Events Secretary.	
9	**Clothing** A new summer lightweight jacket was modelled by N Stops. The Chairman's wife, R Stephens had a range of clothing at the meeting and many items were sold.	
10	**AOB** A Cragg brought up the subject of landing at MOD airfields, the Coastguard looking for training venues and a letter from C Unitt who is retiring from flying. The Chairman raised an issue with a website promoted by Pilot magazine called metar-taf.com which purports to give weather at many of the airstrips in the UK as well as abroad. His hadn't given permission for his strip to be published anywhere except the FFA website. His strip is called an airport making it look as though it was open to all, but there was nothing mentioned about PPR and the weather data was inaccurate and a potential safety issue, as the nearest weather station is 40 miles away. He has raised the issue with the editor of Pilot and had his strip removed by the webmasters. The Membership Secretary will circulate an email about this.	AC
11	**Close the Meeting** The meeting was closed at 14:27. Minutes approved at a subsequent AGM.	

Profile: Robin Culley, nr Turweston, Bucks

By Rebecca Rayner





Above left; Robin Culley, stood in front of his Jabiru, **Right;** Robin in 250hp Pawnee aircraft (previously a crop duster).

Hello Robin, we met on my very first flying farmers event and then I took up your offer of a flight in your Jabiru 430 a few years ago.

Robin, tell us about your early days…

I arrived into this world in July 1943 to the joy of mother and father at Hall Farm, Lillingstone Lovell, Buckinghamshire. I have two older sisters.

During my youth, I had a terrible stammer for many years. My father sent me to a large town school, where I learned very little and failed my 11+ exam with honours! I was then sent to Spratton Hall Prep School and later Buckingham Roman Catholic School where my stammer improved and found my love of Maths and Physics which I excelled at and became top of the class in these two subjects.

Our large farmhouse enabled me to have a bedroom for all things interesting. I used to stoke up my coal fire and used the heat to make a very large soldering iron. I found and built valve radios and a Meccano alarm clock amongst other things. Using a Chemistry Set I distilled water for jam pot batteries, produced coke, tar, gas and then explosions. On one occasion my bedroom wooden floor probably saved my life when I plunged the whole farm into darkness!

Your early flying days…

Most years, pre school, I was given a Rupert Bear Annual Book. In one Annual Rupert flew a plane. Forty years later I tried my hand at gliding from a winch with an old open cockpit T21 and loved it. From money I made from manufacturing and fitting many wood burners in the evenings I bought an ageing K8. It took me up for hours in the sky, once to 14,000ft plus all the BGA Silver 'C' qualifying flights.

Tom Miller flew into Turweston one day with a Super Falke motor glider with a VW engine G-BEGG which he bought from RAF Bicester. I was hooked at being able to fly when the sun doesn't shine. He wanted a mate to go halves and after two months he had my money and I had half a plane and a CAA licence for motor gliders.

Around this time policeman Brian Roberts became a great friend. For nearly 20 years we took part or helped run the National Police Fly Association competitions. I was privileged to being made an honorary member of the Association. With Brian being a great navigator, we made a good team and one year we won the cup for the Overall Champion and Best Crew!

How did you gain your PPL?

A wonderful character from the Hanslope Embassy came into my life and said I should fly a proper aeroplane and I could learn in one of his two Warriors. Obtaining a PPL licence, the CFI at Hinton Gliding Club invited me to join the tug rota using their Pawnee. Between milking cows at weekends for 15 years my feet were mostly in the air either soaring, teaching or towing gliders. I have counted around 2500 tows in total with 39 tows on one long summer's day!

How did you acquire your Jabiru?

I realised that old people could not climb out of motor gliders and I was ageing. A beautiful Jabiru kit plane stood proud at a LAA show. Persuading our little syndicate to go for it, we sold the Faulke and built the Jabiru which has served us proudly since 2007.

What have you gained from being a member of the Flying Farmers Association?

I had to regain my PPL licence after requiring Medical Stents to be fitted.

The Flying Farmers encouraged me to adventures way beyond my comfort zone, flying to see farmers and entrepreneurial enterprises first in England, Scotland and Ireland, then on to The Channel Islands, Southern France and Holland and even Norway and Finland as well as the countries in between.

And a Special Thanks…

I have experienced many cultures, types of farming and associated industries, had great meals, slept in many great hotels and had wonderful hospitality. It is such a privilege to be one of the FFA 400 members. I cannot thank the Committee and everyone involved enough for all the experiences, friendship, fun and encouragement that would have passed me by were it not for the FFA. Thanking you All and Best wishes as the Association passes its 50 years.