

22nd April. You can read all the details on the LAA website at http://www.lightaircraftassociation.co.uk/2010/Consultation/ofcom_1.html and respond in your own words. John Brady and the team have also suggested that you respond by email as the electronic response form is very temperamental. I would go further than this and suggest you also write to your MP about this ridiculous "tax" as this subject needs to be a parliamentary issue.

Join the LAA

Just to remind those who are not members or people you know who may consider joining the LAA there are still the special offers for new members. When joining you have the option of a free VFR 2010 Guide or 15 months for the price of 12 or a £20 LAA Shop Voucher. Joining is not just for those operating a permit type aircraft but all those with an interest in keeping GA affordable and as free of regulations as possible. LAA members are doing a superb job of responding to the many consultations being produced plus helping to fight to keep the rapidly diminishing number of airfields open. What do these members get back in return? They receive an excellent monthly magazine plus the knowledge that they did their part in keeping GA alive in the UK.

GASCo report

As you may have read elsewhere, John Thorpe has now stepped down as the Chief Executive of GASCo to be replaced by Mike O'Donoghue. Mike has a long background of working with flight safety at various times in his life and will be a great asset to the GASCo organisation.

The CAA is coming under new management with Gretchen Burrett being appointed to the board as Group Director, Safety Regulation as of the 1st April. She is currently Group Director of Safety at NATS. Her background is from the US Air Force and human factors and safety management in the defence industry. GASCo's CE and Chairman will be having discussions with her and with Jonathan Smith at NATS to determine a closer working relationship in future between NATS and GASCo.

The CAA has recently had Dame Dierdre Hutton appointed as the chairman of the board; she was previously chairman of the Food Standards Agency. They have also got a new Chief Executive, a new post for the CAA, in Andrew Haines who comes from South West Trains, the rail division of First Group and First Great Western. Should be very interesting?

Discussions regarding the way forward for safety in aviation in the UK are continuing with detail discussions between the GASCo board and the CAA.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES (or PDA's!) 2010

13th March – VAC Annual Dinner, Littlebury Hotel

15th March – CAA Safety Evening; Turweston

28th March – VAC Spring Rally, Turweston

14th April – LAA Oxford Branch meeting

17th April – VAC Daffodil Rally, Fenland

12th May – LAA Oxford Branch meeting; Jonathan Smith from NATS

9th June – LAA Oxford Branch meeting

19th September – VAC & Turweston Wings & Wheels

Have you checked out the LAA website at www.laa.uk.com ?



OXFORD

Branch Newsletter for March 2010

Chairman – Pete Smoothy

Treasurer – David Brooks

Evening Events – John Bean

Safety Officer, NC Rep, Newsletter & web moderator – John Broad john.broad85@talktalk.net

Secretary – Barbara Rose

Social Events – Colin Hughes

Regular Meetings

19:30 hrs on 2nd Wed of each Month at Foxcombe Lodge Hotel, Boars Hill Oxford

February Meeting – Branch AGM

The meeting all look forward to each year to rush forward and volunteer to take over all the jobs! The silence is deafening.

The current chairman, Pete Smoothy, opened the meeting with the fact that the branch has been without a treasurer since the untimely death of John Siertsema. Starting with the chairman's report from Pete who thought that the past year had been fairly neutral. Whilst there had been some very good events the participation from the members had been generally poor. In spite of the response from the membership he thanked the committee individually for all their hard work.

Looking towards the coming year a request was made for someone to take over the task of chairman; met by silence! Rob Stobo stated that the branch is indebted to Pete for all his work, agreed by all, over the past years and proposed that Pete remains chairman for the next year. All were in favour and Pete is willing to continue. The rest of the committee were voted in as follows; Barbara Rose to continue as Secretary. Treasurer David Brooks, proposed by Rob Stobo and seconded by Colin Hughes, all were in favour and the chocolate box (empty of chocolates of course) was duly passed to him. As no one volunteered to take on the press, publicity, newsletters, web moderator, national council representative or safety officer, John Broad will carry on with these tasks for another year. Responsibility for fly-outs will continue on an ad-hoc basis between Pete & Colin using text messaging. Responsibility for speakers will continue with John Bean with help from all the members. Social activities and emailing information to the branch members and LAA members in the area will continue with Colin Hughes; he made a request for ideas. Rob Stobo will also be on the committee and will be acting Vice Chairman if Pete cannot make a meeting but was emphatic that he will not accept being moved to chairman!

An obvious fact is that the branch needs to have more young people at the meetings. A suggestion that the local ATC may be interested in attending will be followed up. It is a sad fact that the list of LAA members supplied each month from HQ are always invited to attend and so far only three have taken up the offer. Pete also pointed out that struts many years ago were an information source for people who were building aircraft whereas today those constructing a particular type of machine will use the internet to contact the user groups for that type rather than visit their local strut or branch. Another aspect is the price of the kits being so high that it is unlikely for young people to be able to afford them. Years ago there were people spending around £4,000 on a Talyor Monoplane who are not doing so today.

A request for speakers or subjects for speakers produced a few ideas. Membership subscriptions are to remain as last year for the time being. The Foxcombe Lodge Hotel is now under the new management of Gary Adams who assures us that he wishes all the clubs who normally meet at the Hotel to continue as they always have done. With the buffet arriving the meeting concluded and members spent the rest of the meeting socialising.

Strut Fly-out to East Kirkby (well, that was the plan!)

The call came in for those who wished to join the fly-out to East Kirkby, where the Lancaster is that does occasional engine runs. A really interesting place to visit with a fine museum and a restaurant. Drive up to Hinton to meet up with Pete and Ann. Dudley and Trevor arrived in Dudley's Robin DR400 and Colin Hughes dropped in with his Jodel. Aircraft refuelled and back to Pete's hangar for a briefing on the plan. First problem was no answer from East Kirkby. Change of destination to Fenland seemed good and they were OK for visitors. Out to the aircraft, fire up and taxi to the hold and the second problem arose when Pete's aircraft didn't have any electrical power being generated. Everyone returned to the aircraft park with Colin having to complete a circuit as he had already taken off. As it would be better working on the aircraft back in the warmth of the hangar, Pete elected to stay and work out what the problem was. I transferred to Dudley's aircraft for the flight which was blessed with clear weather and bright sunshine all the way. As we overtook Colin up by Northampton his aircraft looked superb cruising along serenely. This route makes you aware of the rapid spread of the wind farms across England and as Dudley noted, they also pointed out to us that we were heading directly into wind. After parking the aircraft we were also very aware of the very low temperature of that biting wind, even though the sun was still shining brightly!



Nord 3202 at Fenland

An unusual visitor to the field was a Nord N3202 with its Potez engine jutting out and the trailing link undercarriage, all very 1960's.

Dudley and Trevor didn't have the all day breakfast as they were eating later that evening (that's what I was told to put in this report). I had the beef Sunday lunch and very good it was too.

Remember that the VAC will be holding the Daffodil Rally at this airfield on the 17th April; all visiting pilots will get a bunch of Daffodils to take home.

The return flight proved a little more difficult as although the wind was now behind us, that lovely sunshine was right on the nose reducing visibility forwards. Back at Hinton a number of people were about to depart from the parachute aircraft and so a hold off to the west proved sensible. Back on the ground Pete hadn't found the problem as he hadn't the right test gear.

I must pass on my thanks to Dudley for taking me along and to all for making the day very pleasant.

CAA Safety Evening - Turweston

As David Cockburn continues his travels around the UK presenting the CAA safety evenings, he is planning to be at Turweston on Monday 15th March. If you wish to go along it is advisable to check with Turweston Flying School on 01280 701167 for final details and book a place but I understand that the event is to take place in the conference room with a prompt start time of 19:30. You can take your flying log book along to get it stamped to say you have attended the event.

This may be one of the last times you will see David presenting his safety evenings as he is due to retire, or at least reduce his work to a couple of days a week back at Gatwick. If the plans come to fruition GASCo will be taking on this job using "Regional Safety Officers" (RSO's) across the country with information provided by the CAA. If you fancy the job (a small retainer is planned) then contact GASCo at Rochester.

David usually has a prize for someone who attends these events and you can only win it if you go along. Remember the old saying that there are no new aviation accidents, just new people having them!

Consultations

These keep arriving with monotonous regularity and as people interested in General Aviation it will be up to each and every one of you to respond! Yes, it does concern you because if we all don't take any action we will end up with no GA and some very bad regulations regarding everything from security to more taxes!

One of the most important is the "regulatory framework consultation", which is supposed to be an update of the laws that underpin the Civil Aviation Authority by a new act of parliament. The way this is now written is to accommodate commercial aviation as GA only appears twice and one of those is only a reference to the number of GA prosecutions! I will not attempt to provide you with possible text here as it is far too complicated but if you visit http://www.lightaircraftassociation.co.uk/2010/Consultation/framework_1.html you will find a good explanation of the problem. Unfortunately, you will have to do this tomorrow morning as the consultation ends on the 18th March!

OFCOM Radio Frequency Charging: Yes, they still have the misguided proposal to charge for aviation frequencies. The deadline for your response to this ill conceived "tax", because that is what it really is, has now been extended to the