



March 2004 Informal News

Startup – Dave Thomas

Members, Friends,

Currently there is no formal IBM FC Newsletter to issue as I am concentrating on sorting out other issues which I think are more important. However, there is a need to communicate a number of items to you so I am distributing this bulletin outlining a number of initiatives that are in place and in plan. The Newsletter has not been forgotten, so if you have any items that you wish to have published in the next newsletter, then please mail them to Paul Goodman at Paul_Goodman@uk.ibm.com. I would like to publish another newsletter before Easter if we can, but we can only do that given enough articles.

One of the challenges that I believe we need to address within the Flying Club is to improve our communications; simplifying our overall communication, and yet providing greater function. One thing you will notice that I have already done is to have all communication coming via Phil; by doing this we only have to worry about maintaining one copy of the distribution list rather than many. A small step, but a positive one I believe. However, this still means that we have both a possible bottleneck and a potential inhibitor to improved communication if all notices have to flow via Phil, therefore I have been looking further afield to see what else we can do.

What we really could do with is a mechanism that would enable individual members to send out notices to other members 'automatically'. So, if someone is looking for a companion to go to France, or is trying to find someone who has flown into a particular airfield... we should be able to find a means of enabling them to do so. Russell Young's bulletin board appears to offer exactly this capability. What I therefore propose is to set up a members' only group. Initially we would register all existing members (and only members), and subsequently add and delete members as appropriate. No-one would be allowed to register themselves. Only members would have online access to the group data. No e-mail addresses would be externalised. By these means I would expect to prevent any 'address trawling' for members' e-mails. If we do this, then we will have set up a bulletin board for members which will enable you to broadcast messages to others without involving myself or Phil, or anyone else. Yet, we will have vision of those messages. I would not propose to have any moderators as this will only be available to a closed group of people; but, anyone abusing the system would be expelled.

In order to make this work I need your agreement to add your e-mail id to this board (members only). In the past, to be very frank, persuading the vast majority of you to respond to any notes has been a challenge, but in this case, I do believe that we have a real benefit if we do this. If you agree, please send me a note confirming that you are happy for us to add your name to the board. If you have concerns please let me know and I will do what I can to

address them. Please do not do nothing!

Our recent two offsite meetings have both been very successful. Let me remind you that we are meeting in the Ship in Havant on Friday 26/Mar, and also announce a new offsite meeting. We are planning to hold our next offsite session at Blackbushe Airport on 30/April. This still needs to be confirmed, but if it is not at Blackbushe it will be somewhere nearby. This is part of my desire to try and move the C of G of the club a bit further north. Please can those of you from in and around London, keep the evening free and plan to join us for a pie, a pint, and a chat. I look forward to seeing you there.

At the AGM there was some debate over whether we should continue to renew the Aerad subscription, to drop it, or to replace it with Jeppesen so that we still had access to UK approach plates. The overwhelming vote of the committee was that although approach plates can be downloaded from the 'net, this is both time consuming and not really practical. It was also felt that other information contained within the Jeppesen volumes was valuable and should be made available to the Club. We have now ordered Jeppesen approach plates for the UK, and these will in future be maintained by Clare. Anyone wanting to borrow plates or to look at the entire volume should contact Clare at Clare@partacoona.flyer.co.uk

At the last committee meeting we reviewed the safety subsidies. The current rules allow anyone to claim a subsidy for up to eight safety elements spread over two flights in any one year. The number of people who claim safety subsidies is a very small proportion of the club. Whilst we still wish to subsidise these safety checks we wish to save some of the money to use for other subsidies which will impact a larger number of club members and also encourage more flying activities. So, the bad news is that as from now, you will only be able to claim for a total of four safety elements in any one year. It is felt that this will only affect those pilots with two or more qualifications, without impacting the payment of safety subsidies to basic PPLs.

The good news is that we have decided to provide a subsidy for landing fees for club events. In future, the Club will pay for landing fees where the event has been advertised and is open to the whole FC membership and where the event is attended by three or more aeroplanes. In the event of aeroplanes cancelling at the last minute and there being less than 3 aeroplanes attending the free landing fees would be at the discretion of the FC committee. The landing fee would be capped at 20 pounds per aircraft. As with any other club subsidies this can only be paid to members and is subject to funds being available. Hopefully this will encourage more people to arrange events and also more people to attend events.

Let's see.....

Dave Thomas