

THE ROTATING BEACON



The Bulletin of IFFR (UK) Limited THE UK SECTION OF THE **FLYING ROTARIANS**

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AUTUMN 2004

BUY ONE – GET ONE FREE !

Well not quite, but members joining after 30th September get the benefit of 15 months membership for 12 months subscription. In addition, although the International Dues have been increased from \$25 to \$30 (\$20 to \$25 on renewal) the committee of the UK Section has agreed to hold subscriptions for 2005 to £25 (£20 on renewal). Last year we gained three new members during this quarter who helped to replace those that we lost. If Charles can recruit no fewer than ten new members from Jersey surely you can find one from your Club or its neighbours. An Application Form is attached as last page of this Bulletin. Tear it off and take it to your meeting wearing your IFFR badge and see what result you can achieve. They don't need to be pilots, past or present. Easyjet and Ryanair are equally acceptable for attending activities abroad.

A MESSAGE FROM THE NEW CHAIRMAN OF THE UK FLYING ROTARIANS

July 1st saw the start of a new Rotary year with the UK Section having the honour of having Angus Clark as the World President and Feroz Wadia as the European Vice President. I am sure that you will join me in wishing them both the best for their term of office and I am sure that we shall all support them in every way possible.

One of the most important supporting roles is that of our members attending other Sections' meetings. I am pleased to say that there has been a substantial contingent of our members at each of the French, German and Benelux meetings this year and I do hope that we can continue to support the other Sections in the same way.

During my term as Chairman of the Section we shall celebrate not only 100 years of Rotary International but also 40 years of IFFR. We last arranged a European tour in 2000 to celebrate the Millennium and I am hoping that we can arrange a similar tour next year. Members of the Benelux and German Sections have already volunteered to help organise stopovers for the tour.

It only remains for me to thank Ian Kerr for his tireless work as our Chairman over the last two years. Ian has not only spent a considerable amount of time organising our own Section but has visited many of the other Section meetings during his term of office. Our Section has moved on and we are now run as a Company limited by guarantee rather than the old informal association. Ian, you will be a very hard act to follow but I am sure with the excellent team I have supporting me we shall continue to flourish as a Section.

John Bowden

The Italian Job

Three aircraft from the UK participated in the Italian Section meeting and flew to Rome. Our World President and his wife Alisma having to make the longest trip of over 1000 nautical miles each way with Charles Strasser and Dorothea flying from Jersey and ourselves the relatively short hop of 580 miles from Spain.

Rome (Urbe) was surprisingly easy to fly into – radar controlled all the way with step down altitudes for a straight-in approach. Angus had a more interesting arrival. No one needs fear flying into Rome as the controllers speak perfect English and are used to handling foreign visitors.

Having arrived before lunch we were taken to the hotel where we were invited to join the organizers for lunch before the business of collecting the others began.

Dinner was at a restaurant at the Catacombs on the Via Appia Antica dating from the 1st century BC. Needless to say the meal was well up to the Italian culinary standards you would expect in Rome.

The highlight of the trip for a pilot must surely have been the Italian Airforce Museum (Military Airport Vigna di Valle) where we were taken the next morning. Surprisingly it was located on a lake --a beautiful setting-- and quite logical one when we consider the number of seaplanes that the Italians built. The two expeditions with more than thirty seaplanes flying in formation to North and South America in the 1930s must have been a spectacular sight.

The Red Ferrari Horse that we now see on the exclusive cars was actually the emblem painted on an aircraft flown by a cavalry officer. The fabric panel from the wreck of the aircraft was presented by the mother of the pilot to Enzo Ferrari who adopted it.

Amongst other excellent exhibits were the full range of aircraft that took part in the Schneider Trophy races -- all in Ferrari, or should I say, Italian Red. It was certainly a museum where days instead of hours need to be spent. But a very pleasant lunch in the Airforce canteen was calling. A short trip into the centre of Rome was organized for the afternoon – how can one possibly see Rome in an afternoon? A valiant attempt was made with a short stop at the Vatican. Just enough to whet our appetites and make us all resolve to return to Rome for an extended stay.

The formal dinner was at the oldest Sporting Club in Rome—the exclusive “Reale Circolo Canottieri Tevere Remo”. Situated on the River Tiber and famous for its rowing teams, the Club provided the perfect setting for an outdoor dinner.

The guests included the president of the local Rotary Club (Rome Nord-Est), the Director of the Airforce Museum and others who had helped make it a memorable visit.

Giorgio Aletti commented on the French sections fly-in to Morocco during which 4000 Euros was raised. This was for a school for children from the villages who arrived in Marrakech with no education or trade. He suggested that IFFR should become more involved in such worthwhile projects. He has such a project in mind.

Those with a fair distance to travel left before the Sunday Mass that had been organized at the airport. As we were leaving, the Aeroclub di Roma presented Angus and Alisma with their flag. No doubt it will be displayed at some of our future meetings.

We were all invited to the next Italian meeting which will be held around Lake Como with participants being collected from their aircraft and flown to the lake in seaplanes. Certainly a date to put in your diaries.

The flight back to Spain was made in perfect conditions over Elba and Corsica with the added interest of being able to hear Angus and Karl-Heinz Netsch talking to the controllers until well over France.

Our thanks go to Giorgio Aletti, Roland Marrek and the others of their team who made it such a memorable visit.

Feroz Wadia
European Vice President

CAMBRIDGE AGM MEETING MAY 2004

Once again the weekend after the first May bank holiday was chosen for the AGM meeting, this time in Cambridge. The weekend started at Cambridge Airport, the oldest privately owned airport in the country. Whilst some of us had some idea that Marshalls, who own and run the airfield, also provided some maintenance services to the armed forces, I do not think that any of us realised the extent that Marshalls were involved in the major overhaul of RAF aircraft such as the Hercules.

After a detailed talk on the various businesses within the Marshalls Group, we were taken on a hangar tour, which did not fail to impress even the least aviation-minded in the party! Following the tour we were taken by coach to the Holiday Inn, which was to be our base for the weekend. We enjoyed an informal dinner at the hotel that evening and as always good fellowship.

On Saturday morning we travelled to Ely where we enjoyed tours of both Oliver Cromwell’s house and the Cathedral, in between which we dispersed to local hostelrys for a little warming sustenance. On Saturday evening we enjoyed our gala dinner in the magnificent surroundings of Queens College Hall. In such surroundings the event was very special and will I am sure be remembered by those who attended for a long time.

On Sunday morning we split into two groups. A number went from Cambridge to the Imperial War Museum at Duxford to watch a flying display whilst the rest of us went punting on the River Cam. Unfortunately the weather during the weekend was “typically English” and the River Cam was in full flood. Nevertheless the guided tour which was partially on foot and partially in the punts gave us all an insight into the history of Cambridge in general and the splendour of the University Colleges in particular.

It was delightful to have Ray Stebbings in our party when we took the walking tour of the town. Ray had stayed in Cambridge when a young boy and treated us to a number of stories such as his escapade on a horizontal pipe outside a fourth floor window and the students’ escapades such as the mooring of a rowing eight between the twin spires of Trinity College Chapel!

For those of us leaving Cambridge by air on the Sunday, careful consideration of the weather was required. With a scattered cloud base at 600 feet and broken at 1000 feet for those travelling south it was largely IMC until crossing the Thames. However this did not detract from an excellent weekend and I should like to record our thanks to Ian Kerr particularly for the work he put into organising the event with the able assistance of Kevin Young.

IFFR – French Section – Normandie Fly-in **10th/12th September 2004**

A couple of days before the event the long range forecast was not terribly optimistic, however on Friday it looked that a window between two areas of bad weather would be available provided we left at 0900/0930 and did not arrive at Deauville too early to avoid CBs/TS. I had loaded the GPS with a point in the very narrow gap between Le Havre and Guivenchon in case we had to fly at low level as we did not wish to test whether one could be at the receiving end of a Nuke! To be certain we flew at 3500ft. On arrival at Deauville we were met by a lot of animation, and laughter could be heard from the airport restaurant balcony so Sheila, Brian McGraw and I knew that we were in for a good weekend. A large group of our French friends was assembled with incomers from Belgium, Scotland, England and Germany.

To Caen by coach, after a very good lunch, to visit the Caen Memorial – an impressive site – one of Mitterand’s Grands Projets in 1998. The exhibition arranged along a sloping spiral led to a cinema where the Battle of Normandie was shown with archive films both from the Allies and the Germans point of view. Along the way recordings of the voices of de Gaulle, Churchill, Laval and Army Generals conversations were heard. This account is too short to detail everything of interest. Afterwards, a drive through charming countryside, a walk to the sea through the pleasant seaside town of Cabourg on the way to our hotel and welcomed by the Hotelier, himself a Rotarian. A very informal dinner completed the day.

On Saturday, Pegasus Bridge, and Mulberry Harbour, are both evocative names and it was extremely interesting to see the actual places and the exhibits in the museums attached to them. One can only marvel at the ingenuity, expertise, precision and bravery of the people. The vast American Cemetery at Coleville, impeccably maintained was a sobering sight, set on the cliffs above Omaha beach – now a large and peaceful expanse of sand again.

Viewing the tapestry actual worked by Queen Mathilda and her ladies after 1066 was another great experience at Bayeux. The Top Brass was well represented with World President Angus Clark who inaugurated 3 new French IFFR members at an excellent Gala Dinner at a Grand Hotel on the seafront, together with European Vice-President Feroz Wadia and UK Chairman John Bowden. Finally it was good to meet Jean Recullet and other members of the French Section including Louis Matone who must be the oldest member of the French Section who had driven himself from Paris, he is 97!

On Sunday morning, Honfleur a former port and walled city, home to privateers, is most picturesque with its ancient streets, tall medieval buildings, boutiques and art galleries, old belfry and church with a timber roof like two upturned boats. Here we had our farewell lunch before returning to the airport.

Our many thanks to Guy Papernot for having organised such an enjoyable and memorable fellowship weekend.

Ives Branson.

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Aloha Hawaii

Whew!! Flying at 200feet above the sea – steep turns at a 60-degree angle in order to take photographs of the steaming molten lava flowing into the sea from the active Volcano Kilauea on “Big Island”. Five minutes earlier we had been swooping down with Rtn Eliot Merk in his Mooney to capture the green and black beaches and Captain Cook’s monument in an inaccessible cove. Yes, that was the flavour of the 2004 post Convention Flyaround in Hawaii - spectacular scenery; breathtaking flying and a friendly welcome everywhere. We had all met up three days previously in Honolulu and after the initial get together had flown to the Hawaii or Big Island, as it is known, to start our aerial tour of five Hawaiian Islands. Low cloud and steam from the volcano then forced Eliot to instigate an ILS approach by GPS to Hilo, his home airfield, for a refuelling stop. This memorable flight was a condensed version of our nine-hour bus trip of the previous day. This had included viewing by foot the crater of the extinct volcano, sampling coffee grown on the island and marvelling at the diverse vegetation and terrain. Before leaving Big Island we continued our low - level aerial view to the north part, viewing numerous waterfalls cascading over the 1000 feet steep cliffs into the sea then it was on to our next island stop, Maui

A very professional Luau at Old Lataina was our entertainment that evening. What a spectacular site - a tropical garden arranged with tables and chairs, encircling the grassy stage. After a traditional pig roast buffet we settled back to watch the entertainment. Beautiful grass skirted maidens and virile young men danced and gyrated to the pulsating music. A high-speed change linked with expert choreography was magical to watch. The backdrop for this show was the glinting calm sea through the tropical palms. A competition to see how many of the alcoholic cocktails on the menu we could get through added to the merriment. Eric Charlez was the winner.

Another day dawned with a very slow bus ride along twisting narrow roads. Finally we arrived at Charles Lindbergh’s grave in a very peaceful idyllic spot over looking the ocean. He had lived on this island for the later years of his life. Angus and I had enough of the droning bus driver and we opted for a quicker mode of transport. Half way round the island was a small airfield where Bev Fogle had flown her rented

Cessna earlier in the day. Mike Graves who was sharing the aircraft took over piloting the aircraft and Angus, Cynthia and I were climbing skyward from sea level to 10,000 feet to view the inside of the crater of Haleakala. We ascended in a spiralling climb, dodging the layers of cloud, to arrive at the edge of the crater. Mike circled four times inside the crater so that we could take photographs and to marvel at the myriad of colours - brown, mauve, red, ochre and black. Two hikers could just be seen by the naked eye following one of the trails inside the crater. Their trip probably would have been arranged six months previously and take them two days to complete. Ours was all over in three quarters of an hour.

Rtn Steve Bobko was our next pilot in his new Malibu for our trip to Molokai and then onto Honolulu. Steve and his wife, Jo Anna, had entertained the whole group in his ocean-side house in Kuala Kano two nights before. Plush leather seats, a drinks cabinet and room to stretch our feet were now the order of the day. This was luxury compared with the cramped cockpit of our Robin. Our destination was to a Leper Colony on Molokai, which was formed in the 19th Century for the inhabitants of the Islands who had contracted the disease. Seven thousand unfortunates were banished to this peninsula and died there. The colony was run part of the time by a Belgium Priest, Father Damien and Catholic Sisters who spent all their lives looking after these forgotten people. Today 36 lepers still live in this Colony by choice. The disease is kept at bay by modern drugs. The hospital has disappeared but four churches are still active in this small outpost, showing the importance of religion for these rejected people. Father Damien, who himself died from leprosy, is in the process of being canonised. The National Park Service run the area now but the only two ways way in and out are by air or by a donkey ride down a very steep treacherous path from the plateau.

Leaving this Island in our luxurious transport I reflected how lucky we all were. Steve expertly flew us back to Honolulu, which we had left five days before. A very bumpy approach due to down drafts from the hills skirting Waikiki Beach, lead us into a clear view of Pearl Harbour on base leg. Dropping us off Steve was in the air again on an Angel Flight. Four children were required for hospital treatment in Honolulu from Hawaii. He travels about four hundred hours a year on quests like this. Waikiki Beach is a typical high-rise beach resort with a turquoise sea, golden sands and surfing galore. A bustling nightlife was enhanced by groups of high school graduates celebrating the end of their school year.

A watery day trip to a coral reef at Kaneohe Bay was our R and R for Saturday. We viewed hundreds of coloured fish as we all honed our snorkelling skills. On Monday a moving historic visit to the USS Arizona Memorial at the National Cemetery of the Pacific Punchbowl brought history to life and made us realise the sacrifices of many in the pursuit of peace.

Thirty-two individuals took part in the Hawaiian Adventure organised very professionally by Joe Heifer. By the farewell dinner we were a congenial, boisterous group who had enjoyed great fellowship and a variety of pleasurable days and evenings with many laughs and unforgettable experiences. Thanks a million to everyone concerned.

Aloha Hawaii

Aloha IFFR.

Alisma Clark

MUSINGS OF AN IFFR AERONAUTE REGARDING A GERMAN FLY-IN

Having made my first 'long flight' to the French IFFR Fly-in at Marseille last year the prospect of a flight in May to the south eastern border of Germany with Poland and the Czech Republic was even more enticing. Fortunately I was able to find yet another novice to accompany me. The last time Charles was in a light aircraft was in Borneo some 30 years ago and then it was also as a passenger! Nevertheless a second pair of eyes and some basic map reading helps to lighten the pilots work load. Our trusty Cessna172 had been experiencing oleo seal problems but before we set off I had been assured by the engineering company at Hurn that all was well.

As an old man of 65 I thought the 6 to 6.5 hrs of flying would be too much in one day so we planned to stop at Muenchengladbach overnight. The flight to MG was uneventful. On landing I found the oleo had gone down somewhat but was still within tolerance. There is a very pleasant very German hotel 15 minutes walk from the airport so we borrowed a luggage trolley for our luggage and parked it behind the hotel for the following morning. The 3 girls behind the information desk at the airport looked bored out of their minds. We learnt later that the airport has a very uncertain future because of competition from Cologne and Düsseldorf.

After a good night we set off for Bautzen, EDAB. Routing across Germany was made so much easier by the excellent flight programme that John Bowden had very kindly printed off for me. This was a result of meeting him and Ives at the Cambridge Fly-in earlier in the year. It certainly makes route planning so much easier.

I found German ATC very helpful in the main and being routed along the Rhine overhead Cologne was fascinating. I had last been there, on the ground by the famous cathedral, some 25 years earlier whilst serving in Germany with the Army. Flying over such places as Cologne, the Ruhr and close to Weimar, Leipzig and Dresden made me think a lot about times gone by.

When we landed at EDAB in fine sunny but windy weather most other flyers were already there. The airfield had been a Russian/DDR fighter base and one needed little imagination to visualize how it was only a few years ago: bunkers, disused telephone exchange and air conditioned secure rooms and barrack blocks were plain to see. One of our members had over-flown when a/c were lined up ready for disposal after the fall of the Wall.

The next 3 days were well organised and we had very interesting visits and good typical meals in local venues. One could readily see that the east is still very much the poor relation compared to western Germany and I heard some very strong comments and views on this situation from a few of the German members. Needless to say they were westerners!

Our very smart hotel was in Zittau which itself was interesting and we had a guided tour. We also had a guided tour of Gornitz on the river Neisse. Across the river was Poland that of course had shed the shackles of Russia years before the DDR.

Once again history and memories came flooding back. With other tourists we listened to a wonderful organ recital played on The Sun Organ in St Peters Church.

We had a days visit to Poland. On the way we passed derelict lignite mines and power stations. Yet across the border we could see those same mines still working and the powers stations belching out thick acrid smoke.

Immediately on crossing the border one was in a different world: potholed roads, tiny fields with one or two cows, vast tracts of land uncultivated, men on stools by the roadside selling cigarettes. There were still many houses and apartment blocks from the Russian era still standing or crumbling away. They looked so drab and grey.

We visited a mountain resort near a ski slope and had a tour of a Norwegian wooden church that had been transported to the resort some 120 years ago: no screws or nails in the construction. Outside in the cemetery I came across a small group by a grave. It was the grave of the grandfather of one of the German IFFR wives. He had been the vicar of the church for years prior to and during the war. In 1946, going to open his door to a knock, Polish Partisans or Terrorists shot him through the door. It was assumed in retaliation for the war. Some 10 million Germans were expelled from the new Poland post 1945.

We then went on to visit the house of the German philosopher and writer Goethe. In the early evening we had dinner with the local Polish Rotary Club in a small schloss in Hirschberg. It was rather a strain for me to hold a conversation in German with a Pole! Nevertheless we had a very interesting time. We were told that there is no middle class in Poland only the rich and the poor. A Polish University Professor gave us an all too short resume of his countries hopes and fears about joining the EU and an over view of the Polish economy: pretty gloomy.

The forecast on Sunday was not too good, rain and strong winds plus CBs. We all decided to bug out ASAP. Unfortunately for me, on arrival at the airfield, I found the oleo had collapsed. As the other aircraft started to fly away between very heavy showers and CBs Charles and I enlisted the support of the fuel attendant come grounds woman to let us use her mobile mini compressor. All this took time for we had stop work every time a heavy shower arrived. Soon we were the last visiting aircraft left on the field: not a comforting feeling. We eventually left Bautzen at 1630. This meant we could not accept the kind offer of a night at the farmhouse of a German Count and his charming wife (Graf and Graffine) near Kassel.

Night was closing in when we arrived at Moenchengladbach again. Fortunately for us another commercial aircraft had booked a late arrival otherwise the field would have been closed! Another lesson learnt. Next morning the oleo was down again so we took the aircraft to Rhine Air Services where they put oil and nitrogen into the oleo cylinder. There was no charge but the engineer suggested I take the aircraft back to have it converted to diesel!!

The return to UK went without a hitch and I am pleased to say that the oleo, having been serviced this time at Bournemouth, has caused no more problems. Yet again a very interesting and worthwhile visit, not to mention a few more lessons and flying experiences plus 2 more airfields in the log book. Here's to the next overseas fly-in

Graham Browning

BLETCHLEY PARK

Looking back over the summer it does seem that the D Day celebrations overshadowed all our activities. In contrast to Dunkirk which was a disaster for British Forces, D Day was a triumph notwithstanding the losses suffered in the initial assault on the beaches. Naturally British television tended to emphasise the part that we had played in this biggest invasion in history, while sometimes overlooking the fact that in terms of numbers the Forces provided by our American allies from Canada and the United States greatly outweighed our own.

In one respect however the British with the aid of our Polish allies were able to make a contribution to the war effort that General Eisenhower stated probably reduced the length of the war by as much as two years. In all warfare the ability to ascertain the intentions and present disposition of enemy forces is of incalculable value to a military commander and every effort is made to make ones communications meaningless to an opponent by encoding every message.

The Enigma machine devised by the Germans which was largely mechanical was thought by them to be proof against any form of decoding and thus safe to use for the modern method of instant communication that had come to the fore by 1939 – radio. The enemy (in this case the British) could intercept radio messages and an elaborate network of radio stations was established for that sole purpose. However the Germans had reckoned without the brains of one man, aided by a dedicated team set up in the delightful country house far enough away from London to be safe from bombing but close enough for decoded messages to be delivered by hand to the War Office. Alan Turing devised the machine that came to be known as the Turing Bombe and later built the world's first programmable electronic computer known as "Colossus".

On a windy Wednesday in July members of the UK Section were taken on a conducted tour of Station X, the wartime name of the code-breaking centre, and after a buffet lunch heard the history of the development of the Enigma machine from a commercial tool for business confidentiality and of the efforts made to intercept and read foreign messages. While the main mansion has been well preserved some of the wartime temporary huts showed signs of their age and we wondered at the dedication of those who froze during the winter months and sweated through the summer days trying to make sense of messages in code and in a foreign tongue.

Being held on a weekday the attendance was naturally largely from those retired or able to steal a day off most of whom arrived by road after negotiating the complex geography of Milton Keynes & Bletchley. Several came a much longer distance by air but having been warned of the exorbitant fees demanded at Cranfield for landing and parking flew into Turweston which was less expensive even allowing for shared taxis.

The onset of a very wet front coming from the east with falling cloudbase meant that some had to leave a little early but those that stayed on could collect souvenirs from the Museum shop which included a simple replica of the Enigma machine with which I am able to pass coded messages to my grandchildren that their parents cannot read ! Everyone agreed that the visit had been a memorable day and once again we were grateful to Brian McGraw who had arranged the event for all his efforts in making the event possible.