



*THE ROTATING BEACON*

**SPRING 1993 BULLETIN**

**OF THE**

**INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP OF FLYING ROTARIANS**

**UNITED KINGDOM SECTION**

**IFFR**

## I LEARNED ABOUT FLYING FROM THAT A SILLY STORY

Once upon a time there were two Rotarian pilots returning from the Malta Rally. It might have been the fact that they had flown for seven hours the day before - six-and-three-quarters of them over water - or it might have been the excellent food, wine and company at dinner that same evening. Anyway, there is nothing quite like the euphoria that comes with having faced fear and danger and survived; the meal had been quite a celebration!

It probably addled their brains.

Morning saw them on the ramp at Cannes-Mandelieu, a real garden of an airport in those days, perhaps it still is? The weather was perfect; just enough cloud to provide a little shade, just enough wind to require a navigation plan, just enough visibility to see beyond the horizon. The Robin took off and the pilots set course, following the prescribed visual route over the mountains. It was not necessary, but "Cowardy-Custard" in the left-hand seat had tuned into Montelimar VOR and was watching the indicator, waiting for the flags to start moving and the needle to begin its swing. I'd like to say we were listening for the ident., but we were very slack in those days, besides, we didn't know enough Morse to make it worth-while!

Soon the indicator came to life, and after twiddling the OBS to centre the needle, we settled down to make a reasonable fist of homing in to the beacon. The needle stayed beautifully in the middle of the dial as the aircraft came overhead, dead on ETA. As the TO flag fell the engine stopped! Christ Almighty! I said. That's a powerful beacon, it's knocked out all our electrics!

During the next ten minutes, so it seemed, I checked round the cockpit to see how much damage had been done; in doing so noticed that the gauge for the left wing tank was showing EMPTY. A flick of the fuel selector and the noise recommenced up front. Brian said it took ten seconds, and my hands had disappeared in a blur as they flew round the switches and taps!

I was pleasantly surprised to find that I had trimmed the aeroplane to best glide speed, 70kts, without being conscious of having done so. A glance at our plot showed that we had been flying just one hour from Cannes; the Pilot's Operating Manual says that a wing tank on a Robin Régent holds fuel for just one hour.

What did I learn? I learned that the mind can play tricks on itself. It can jump to the silliest conclusions if it concentrates on one thing too

much. I had been overly concerned about watching the VOR needle, an electric device. When the engine stopped, my mind was so full of "electrics" that it immediately associated the sudden deafening silence with an electrical failure; this happened at the very instant that the "flag" dropped, so my mind assumed it must have been the transmissions from the beacon that had caused the problem.

I also learned that my basic training had been thorough; trimming to 70 kts had been quite automatic, but I learned that it might be a good idea in future to scan all the gauges, and actually look at them. I learned that the Operating Manual sometimes gets it right. I learned that in an emergency time runs at a different pace from normal. Finally, I learned that you can never afford to relax and become complacent when flying.

David Rowe

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### CHANGE OF DETAILS: PLEASE NOTE

The President, Graeme le Quesne, advises us of changes to his Telephone and Fax numbers:  
Tel: 0534 8536233. Fax: 0534 857464.  
Graeme is off to Australia on April 22nd, for the R.I. Convention.

Events Officer Erwin Rodgers has moved.  
New address: 1, Milverton Drive, Bramhall,  
Stockport, Cheshire SK7 1EY. Tel: 061 439 9508  
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### FLYING EVENTS OF NOTE

- May 1 Flower Fly-in - FENLAND, Lincs
- May 2 Navy Day - OLD WARDEN
- May 3 Fighter Collection/Flying Legends  
Air Day - DUXFORD
- May 7-9 Jersey Air Rally - JERSEY/DINAN
- " 21-23 Kilkenny Intl Air Rally - Ireland
- " 28-31 Isle of Mull Fly-in - Scotland

There are scores of such events listed in the flying magazines, the above are only a sample. If any IFFR members living close to such airfields are willing to welcome IFFR aircraft and crews please advise, and we will try to pass on the details. Not all IFFR events need to be full-scale rallies, and with the Committee busy with the OXFORD RALLY outside invitations are very welcome.

The Programme and Booking Form for the OXFORD INTERNATIONAL IFFR RALLY, 2 - 4 July, appear in this issue.

Hotel accommodation in Oxford is limited, so book early - FIRST COME IS FIRST SERVED!  
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## THE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER'S VIEWPOINT

(or - You wouldn't do that - would you?)

AT LEAST five Rotarians have been killed in the past year when flights have ended in a collision with the ground in adverse weather conditions.

Why do experienced pilots continue to die in such circumstances year after year, despite the fact that United Kingdom weather conditions do not assume the epic proportions of those in North America or parts of southern Europe? In my quarter century in the "industry" I have found these accidents generally fall into four main groupings:

**Mechanical Failure:** even the most experienced and fully briefed pilot can come to grief when this happens...rare.

**Blatant disregard of weather:** easy to accuse a (dead) pilot of this fault; but as getting weather information becomes more difficult and expensive, and face-to-face weather briefings almost impossible in the UK - even for commercial pilots - frustration must be a factor. There is arguably room for much improvement of the system.

**Caught out en-route:** it is so easy to talk one's self into continuing a flight into adverse conditions. There are a number of well-known examples of this type of incident and experience seems to be the most important factor. It happened to me long ago, and I was very lucky to get back on the ground with only my pride wounded, but with a valuable lesson learnt! When did you last have a fright in this way?

**Must get home:** this is the stuff of which tragedies are made. You know your own capabilities, and those of your aircraft; every indication says "don't go", but still pilots do, for a variety of reasons: external pressures, such as a job, or fear of running up a bill for the aircraft seem to enjoin pilots to risk their lives. Of all causes this is the most preventable.

About twenty years ago I was a young Radar Controller at an airfield not far from "Auld Reekie". It was a June morning, but more like mid-winter; the cloud base was 100ft with tops reported at 35,000ft. A dark dismal day - even the scheduled flights were not getting in.

To the surprise of the Tower Controller, a Jodel pilot called for taxi and preceded to book out for a Special VFR flight to an airfield about one hundred miles away. In those days clearances could only be withheld for traffic reasons, so after gently trying to persuade the pilot that weather conditions were not suitable for such a flight clearance was nevertheless given.

As a radar controller I would not normally have been too concerned about such flights; they were

routed to keep them well clear of any IFR traffic, but on that day, with nothing else flying, I began to take an interest. It was unlikely that the flight would show on radar for the first few miles, as the weather was causing severe attenuation of the radar signals, so I selected the D/F equipment on the Tower frequency, to monitor his progress.

The aircraft duly departed and after a few minutes asked for a climb. "It's a bit lighter above" he said. I was now taking great interest in the D/F; all indications were showing to the South West, although the pilot had been cleared to depart North; something was wrong, and still no target showing on radar.

It was obvious that the pilot was now in IMC and not sure of his track; not an unusual occurrence, but one which pilots seem to be reluctant to admit. Our usual reaction was to try to get them out of the situation and then discuss the problem on the ground.

I asked the pilot, who by now had been transferred to the radar frequency, if he could accept radar guidance; he said he could, and was given a heading which would take him clear of any high ground and bring him into radar cover. (D/F still showed him West of the field) About a minute later there was a very short transmission, and then nothing. I knew immediately that he had crashed, and we started searching.

The wreckage was found about two miles west of the field. Fire had consumed all but the engine block. The pilot, the only occupant, had died on impact.

As is usual in these cases, everything we said and did was recorded and used at the Fatal Accident Inquiry some six months later. During the intervening weeks I had many a sleepless night, wondering if I might have handled it in a different way, or said something else to the pilot that might have helped.

On the day of the Inquiry the whole story unfolded. The ATC staff involved were subjected to most rigorous questioning by the Sheriff, who seemed to take the view that we should be required to see pilots' qualifications (would *you* expect to present your license to ATC before each flight?), nevertheless we were deemed to have discharged our duties well.

It transpired that the pilot did not have an IMC rating, his aircraft had only "limited panel" flight instruments and he was under financial pressure to get the aircraft home.

The cause determined was that the pilot had tried to fly in conditions beyond his capabilities, had become disorientated, and had spun in.

The event had quite an effect on me: I learned an awful lot about our responsibilities as controllers;

and it gave me ample food for thought the next time I planned a flight. To this day I am exceedingly careful about the weather conditions I fly in - I have never forgotten the voice of that pilot. When next you plan a flight be sure you do not fall into any of the categories mentioned above; if you do get into difficulties, tell someone! It could mean the difference between life and death.

About an hour after that accident I sat down in front of the radar again. The first call was a "Mayday" from the pilot of a Cessna 172 who was lost, short of fuel had no ASI nor VSI because of icing. He made it; but that's another story.

Gerry Newman IFFR #4149  
ATCO at Manchester Airport

[This story had been accepted before Barry Paget's accident]  
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#### MEMBERSHIP NEWS

First, a warm welcome to those who have joined us since the beginning of October last.

Name	Club	Classification
Roger Perot	Guernsey	Advocate
Ted Coles	Stevenage Grange	Retd Bank Manager
William Maclean	Oban	Optical Technician
Jeffrey Malton	Kibworth & Fleckney	Newspapers (ret'd)
James Goodall	Headingly	Dairy Farmer.

Others have joined IFFR direct, and have accepted an invitation to join the UK Section. They include Bruce Montgomery-Smith of Glasgow, who is Chairman of the Host Committee for the 1997 R.I. Convention.

Another is Peter Stokes of Solihull.

I regret having to report the resignation of six members, including John Pile of Haverfordwest, who contributed interesting article to the "Beacon", and Bob Tyderman, who master-minded the Cambridge Rally in 1991.

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#### POST RI CONVENTION FLYABOUT AUSTRALIA

If you have not already booked, you are cutting it fine; but call Ern Dawes on 010 613 874 6333, or fax him on 010 613 874 5627, to find out whether there could be a vacant seat for you. Don't ask me - I've gone!

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#### ROTARIAN BARRY PAGET #3431

The news of the sudden passing of our dear friend Barry, in a flying accident on April 8th came as a shattering shock to the European sections of IFFR. The reasons for the crash are as yet unknown, but the circumstances/conditions were those of thick hill fog near Teignmouth, Devon. Barry, together with his partner in their Wassmer G-BDSN Peter James and Peter's wife all perished in the crash.

I am sure that during the past four or five years, when Barry notched up an almost perfect attendance score at all European fly-ins, his circle of friends grew in response to his friendship/friendliness, his sincerity and that indomitable twinkle in his eye that made him so unforgettable. We also came to know Peter who on several occasions accompanied Barry to share the flying and the fellowship of our get-togethers.

The loss in such tragic circumstances leaves us both richer and poorer. Richer for having had the privilege of sharing our hobby and part of our lives with this gentle man, who celebrated last summer in Tallinn Estonia, during the Scandinavian fly-in, the fiftieth anniversary of his first solo: but poorer for knowing that we shall not have the enjoyment of his company again.

IFFR World President Don Bymaster extends, with me, the deepest sympathy of all members of IFFR to Barry's widow Beryl, to his family and to his fellow Club members in Truro.

We salute the memory of a cherished friend.

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#### EUROPEAN IFFR INVITATIONS

We are invited to the ITALIAN IFF RALLY on 4-6 June in FERRARA, Northern Italy. Details from Andrea Traversi Tel: 010 392 344901, Fax: 010 392 86465295.

Poul Erik Christensen, President IFFR Scandinavia invites us to their Annual Meeting at ODENSE, DENMARK on August 20-22 for a relaxed weekend with dinner-dance on both evenings and a boat trip between the islands on the Saturday with lunch in a castle overlooking the sea. He mentions also their traditional end-of-season fly-in to ENDELAVE, 3rd October.

Those who have been to previous IFFR events in Italy and Scandinavia know what a warm welcome we shall receive, but please check the Danish Insurance requirements if you plan to fly in - they require more cover than most of us hold.

**INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP OF FLYING ROTARIANS  
UNITED KINGDOM SECTION  
INTERNATIONAL RALLY - OXFORD - 2nd -4th JULY 1993**

**Friday 2nd**

- Afternoon** Arrival by air at Oxford Airport, Kidlington. Short tour of CSE at Airport  
Oxford Airport Ops: Tel: 08675-2302 Fax: 0865-841807  
5.00pm Cars & Coach to Hotel
- Evening** 6.30pm Assemble at St Edmund Hall for aperitif  
7.15pm International Dinner - Welcome: Exchange of Greetings

**Saturday 3rd**

- 9.30am** Conducted Walking Tour of the Colleges at Oxford  
Shopping time for those so wishing
- 12.30pm** Depart by Coach and car to visit Blenheim Palace, Woodstock - ancestral home of the Marlborough family - where Winston Churchill was born. Lunch on arrival at Blenheim Palace.
- Afternoon** Guided Tour of the Palace, Churchill Exhibition and Gardens.  
6.00pm. Return to Hotel to prepare for the evening  
7.30pm. Informal Dinner at Hotel.  
**PLEASE NOTE £14 each for Saturday night IFFR dinner in Hotel.**

**Sunday 4th**

- 9.30am** U.K.Section Annual General Meeting - Election of Officers - Reports  
Transport to the Airport for those wishing to attend the PFA Air Rally at Wroughton.  
River Trip and lunch at "Head of the River" for those preferring.  
(Cost not included in registration - please pay direct)
- Afternoon** Final Farewells and Departure.

**HOTEL: Please book direct, stating that you are IFFR  
EASTGATE HOTEL, MERTON STREET, THE HIGH, OXFORD, OX1 4BE  
Tel: 0865-248244. Fax: 0865-791681  
£50 per head per night; bed & breakfast.**

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**BOOKING FORM**

Name:.....IFFR#.....Phone/Fax.....  
Number in party:.....Accommodation required.....  
Arriving Friday afternoon:  
BY AIR to Kidlington ETA:.....Registration:.....Customs needed? Y/N  
BY ROAD to Airport to visit CSE and to welcome visitors.....  
BY ROAD to Hotel.....BY RAIL to Oxford Station..... Other.....  
Number for Dinner:Friday St Edmund Hall.....  
Saturday in Hotel.....  
Visit to Blenheim: I wish to travel by Coach.....: In my own car.....  
Sunday morning: I would wish to:  
Fly to PFA Rally:..... Slot time desired.....  
Take a River Trip:.....(Number) Other:.....

**REGISTRATION FEE £55.00 per head, inclusive of tours and International Dinner on Friday evening.**

**Please advise of your exact requirements. And keep a COPY .**

Please send this form completed direct to Erwin Rodgers at:  
**1, Milverton Drive, Bramhall Stockport Cheshire SK7 1EY  
or FAX 061 653 9719 as soon as possible with cheque for Registration.**

