

INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP  
OF FLYING ROTARIANS



THE ROTATING BEACON

United Kingdom Section

AUTUMN BULLETIN 2001



IS THIS HOW THE AUSTRALIAN & AMERICAN MEMBERS

SEE US IN THE EUROPEAN SECTIONS ?

## **SUMMER PROGRAM 2002**

Diaries are filling up for next year Note the following dates in your diary (when you get it !)

- March 27      Midweek meeting at Coventry to visit Air Atlantique - *Provisional date*
- May 3-4-5      UK Spring Meeting in the West Country Details of venue and hotel to follow
- May 30-June 2   German/Austrian Section Meeting at Flensburg close to the Danish border.
- June 14-17      Joint Meeting with the Yachting Fellowship at Merseyside using Liverpool Airport
- June 15-17      Pre-Convention Assembly at Jersey, Channel Islands
- June 22-26      RI Convention at Barcelona, Spain, followed by Fly-Round Espana
- August          Scandinavian Section Meeting at Billund, Denmark. See LEGO at home.
- Sept 7-8          UK Meeting at Leicester to watch Air Racing - *Provisional*
- Sept 13-15      French Section Meeting

## **ARE YOU GOING 'UP THE WALL'?**

IFFR has been invited to participate in the First Great Wall Air Derby to take place along the route of the great Wall of China from 17<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> May 2002. The Primary Flight Route is a total of 3000 Km each way and there is an extension along the old Silk Road making a one-way distance of 4200 Km. Any type of aircraft with a minimum range of 600 Km and a weight of less than 5600 Kg may take part Full information is available by email to [gwd@sagetreasure.com](mailto:gwd@sagetreasure.com). For those for whom the proposed Fly Round Spain after the RI Convention next June is too tame this event offers a challenge.

## **CHAIRMAN'S END OF YEAR MUSINGS**

As UK Chairman I resolved this year to attend as many European IFFR events as possible. This took me from Prague in the East to Biarritz in the West and from the Aland Islands in the North to Palma in the South. They were all different and with the exception of the Palma meeting are described elsewhere in this bulletin. Before giving my 'Oscar' nominations for 2001 I would like to report briefly on the Iberian Section's meeting.

Probably as a result of limited pre-event publicity the meeting suffered from a low attendance The UK section with four couples, however, led the way Taking the Robin to Majorca for a weekend was simply not practical so by '**go**' we went! My memories of the Island go back 25 years to the bucket and spade era – much had changed, as this was a quality event. On Friday afternoon we had had an extensive walking tour of central Palma followed by an informal dinner in a harbour side restaurant. The highlight of the weekend was undoubtedly the Saturday morning journey from Palma to Soller in a 1920's train The IFFR party was accommodated in the luxury Pullman coach This was followed by a short tram trip to the coast where we embarked for a forty-minute boat trip to La Colabra

The return coach trip to Palma in the afternoon took us over the mountains by a series of hairpin bends with sheer drops in abundance. The event concluded on the Saturday evening with a Gala Dinner in our excellent hotel.

Now to the Oscars!

- Oscar for the best location – German / Austrian Section – Prague
- Oscar for the most novel overnight stay – Scandinavian Section – Sam Bishop's 'Tree Hotel'
- Oscar for the best aviation visit – French Section –Dassault Factory
- Oscar for the best excursion – Iberian Section – Palma –Soller train journey

If you haven't done any European touring IFFR is a great way to start– knowing that you will meet a host of friendly faces. I look forward to meeting some new ones in 2002.

Finally I would like to thank the committee for all their hard work and support in 2001 and to wish everyone all the very best over the Festive Season.

## Angus Clark

### REPORTS ON THE YEAR'S OTHER EVENTS

#### MARIEHAMN

The Scandinavian Section's annual events have a well-earned reputation as ones where good fellowship predominates. This year was no exception. The venue was Mariehamn on the Aland Islands. Although part of Finland the Islands are off the coast of Sweden and indeed Swedish is the dominant language. The 62 who attended came from 9 countries in 21 aircraft. I went the easy way – the £101 Ryanair return to Sweden was too much of a bargain for a Scotsman to pass up! The UK Section was well represented with Ian Kerr and Bill Montgomery from Perth who had flown the long way, over the North Sea, in Ian's Robin. John Donne and Edward Hepburn had travelled the same route but by SAS.

My weekend started with the Section chairman Bo Johnson meeting me at his base airfield of Vasteras. There followed an evening of generous hospitality at the home of another Swedish member, Kurt Bjerneby, in the company some of the European stalwarts, including Karl Heinz Netsch and Wilfred Lemmers. World President Sam and wife Elena were also present. Sam, literally, provided the highlight of the evening when after the party he was driven to the town square and hoisted, somewhat concerned, 100 feet up to his overnight resting place in a one room tree 'hotel'.

The flight in Bo's immaculate Piper Mirage took a little over half an hour. Much as I like my Robin I have to confess that this aircraft was in a different class (and in a different price bracket as well!) Bo was a very brave man when switched off the autopilot and handed me the controls for a brief time. Snacks and refreshments were provided at Mariehamn airport prior to us moving to the town centre hotel. The first event was an evening visit to a local winery for a tasting and a meal. Here the extrovert proprietor Bongo, to give him his nickname, greeted us. Bongo regaled us with a host of stories, which typically centred around Bongo. The more observant of you will have noticed that I wrote winery and not vineyard. This was because the 'wine' was made from apples not grapes. We enjoyed an extensive tasting – the assessment of wine is very much down to individual taste – suffice to say I preferred Bongo's attempts at Alvaros (from the Aland Islands - gettit!) than his 'wine'.

The Saturday morning allowed time for local sight seeing. A number of us went to visit an old sailing ship, the Pommern, which was berthed permanently in the harbour. This remarkable vessel, built on the Clyde in 1904, specialised in transporting wheat from Australia to Europe. What was extraordinary was that it continued in this trade until 1949. In the afternoon we had the option either to attend a demonstration in the use of simulators in ships' officers' training or to go on some sea borne sightseeing. I opted for the latter – the weather was truly brilliant as we crashed through the water to one of the outer islands. From a sailing perspective this archipelago can hardly be bettered as a place to visit. Of those who stayed on dry land my spies tell me, that after been handed a ship happily sailing a straight and safe course, Ian contrived to run it aground! It was by all accounts an absorbing afternoon.

Drinks prior to the Gala Dinner were taken in the interesting surroundings of the Aland Maritime Museum. The dinner itself was a typically enjoyable Scandinavian affair. Excellent food and liquor accompanied by the rumbustious singing of the IFFR songbook were a perfect way to round off the weekend. Sunday was the time for departures and thanks. After going the easy way this year I am already planning to fly to next year's venue, Billund in Denmark, – the home of Legoland – see you there!

**Angus Clark**

**Jersey \*GARAFA Fly-In 2001**  
**13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> July**

“Drop into Jersey – An Aviator's Paradise” reads the title of Jersey Aero Club's new brochure. To check its validity and as an excuse to have a weekend in beautiful Jersey, twenty-seven participants, IFFR members and families, flew there in ten aircraft. The English contingent were joined by four from Holland, under Benelux President Stan's leadership, Karl Heinz from Germany (the Otto Wolf family had to cancel at the last moment), Ian & Feroz from Scotland and Brian Madden flew in twice from Alderney. Although the met forecast from the UK was variable all reported comfortable flights routing either direct from Southampton or by the longer route along the French coast. James O' Neill and Phil Ryder arrived looking relaxed having come the scenic coastal route after conning their wives into flying to Jersey via a commercial flight bringing all the luggage with them!

If our reception was anything to go by, then it most decidedly true! The Jersey Aero Club's new facilities are wonderful, with a new purpose built Clubhouse including GA handling facilities. It must be unique in having the power to process all incoming light aircraft and their passengers for Customs and Immigration. It certainly got our visit off to a friendly and efficient start which was quickly enhanced by the low landing fees, (thanks Charles), free parking and of course the Duty and Tax-free fuel.

Membership of the Aero Club for the weekend was included for all IFFR participants so on the Friday the Club Bar and restaurant veranda provided the meeting place for all arrivals who were greeted by past IFFR World President and current Jersey Club President Graeme and IFFR member David Reynolds. With the clubhouse situated close to the touchdown point for Runway 27 the welcoming party on the veranda commented on the high quality of landing skill shown by members. Noted also was the adept taxiing to find a parking spot whilst avoiding the work in progress building the new taxiway. The veranda was also used to watch the departure of another visitor to Jersey on that Friday when Her Majesty The Queen's BAE146 departed at around teatime generating a Purple Airway back to mainland UK and RAF Northolt. With an intended cruising level of FL190 it did not cause much of a problem for those IFFR members inbound to Jersey. It was noted that the 146 looked in terms of size rather “bottom of the range” but was no doubt very comfortable internally and came equipped with optional accessories such as anti-missile flare dispensers.





Our own shuttle-bus ferried people to the IFFR Hotel, "The Pomme D'Or" on St Helier Sea front and opposite Liberation Square. In the evening at the Champagne reception the group was joined by Jersey Rotary and Inner Wheel Members, including Graeme, David and hotfoot back from San Antonio, Charles Strasser, Jersey's other IFFR Past World President. They then all joined the group for a "Seafood extravaganza" Dinner put on by the Hotel.

The Weekend programme was deliberately relaxed. Saturday started with either shopping or a visit to the new award winning Maritime Museum. An hour there was not really enough but gave a feel of this first class attraction.



*Some of group outside Maritime Museum – photo Ian Kerr*

Coming together the party headed off in our two IFFR minibuses; one driven by Instrument rated Feroz the other by IMC rated Michael P. The natural outcome of this collection of navigational talent was that within ten minutes of leaving St Helier we were lost! Lost on an island nine miles by five takes some doing so with the help of non-pilots and children we eventually arrived safely at our next venue, the German Underground Hospital. Now a museum, it is a complex of tunnels, originally planned as an ammunition store but converted in 1944 to a bombproof hospital.

Lunch was taken at the Rozel Bay Inn, up on the north-east corner of the Island, close to our afternoon visit to Jersey Zoo. Not a Zoo in the traditional sense, it is a conservation centre run by the Gerald Durrell foundation dedicated to saving rare species from extinction. (GA take note!). Particularly impressive were the gorillas, with all their human characteristics and the orang-utans with their amazing agility. Leaving the Zoo once again gave rise to navigationally challenging opportunities as we wended our way back to the east coast and to the home of Charles Strasser overlooking St Catherine's Bay. Terraced into the hillside the view from his garden looking across to the French coast was superb. Coupled with the legendary Strasser hospitality and perfect weather it made a wonderful visit. Originally kindly offered by Charles as "a stop for Tea", the Champagne and buffet made it into a Garden Party par excellence. We also learnt a great deal about the government of Jersey and about their hopes and fears for the Island in the future. Jane Pudney made a presentation to Dorothea on behalf of us all for such wonderful hospitality.

Saturday evening consisted of a "Barbecue" at the Jersey Aero Club held in the upstairs restaurant. The new Chef and his staff provided all the benefits of the traditional outdoor activity without the drawbacks of a normal Rotary event, namely choking smoke and food burnt to a cinder. On Sunday morning the IFFR party after consuming hearty breakfasts had a morning of free choice. Some of the longer distance flyers left earlier whilst others took their time to visit a few more sites before they too set out for home. All were in agreement that the weekend had been wonderful fellowship, with good company and good food and taking part had been well worth the effort. The flight back home to the UK with the in excess of sixty-mile visibility over the Channel was for many the icing on the cake.

The verdict on the Jersey Aero Clubs claim of "Jersey – Aviators paradise" - well we agree – we think it's as close as you'll get in this world. But don't take our word for it - go and see for yourself. Our thanks go to The Jersey Rotary Club, The staff of the Jersey Aero Club, Jersey ATC, Jersey Tourism & Sasha May of Seymour Hotels for all their help in arranging and supporting our visit.

*\*Jersey Airport is the Worlds first GARAFa site. GARAFa stands for General Aviation Recreational Aircraft Friendly Airport.*

**Michael Pudney**

## **CZECHMATES**

The prospect of visiting the Sudetenland by air brought back childhood memories of Neville Chamberlain landing at Croydon Airport waving a piece of paper, and like all German/Austrian IFFR events promised to be something not to be missed. The highlight of the weekend was to be a day spent sightseeing in Prague, capital of the Czech Republic, a city full of the history and architecture that characterises Central Europe.

As strong contingent from Britain set off on Thursday to stop overnight at Charleroi - Brussels South - ready to arrive in time to be met by the welcoming party armed with a welcome glass of fizz. Karlovy Vary is a spa town close to the German-Czech border and after lunch at the Golf Club we spent the warm and sunny afternoon exploring the attractive town centre laid out along the banks of the river Ohre. Dinner was a lively affair held in the cellars of the magnificent Grand Hotel Pupp, with some of us retiring early to be ready for the coach at 7.0 am next morning when armed with a packed breakfast we set out in pouring rain for Prague.

The two hour journey was enlivened by a fascinating history lesson on the origins of the Czech Republic given by Karl Heinz Netsch, a leading figure in the German/Austrian Section, who was born in Czechoslovakia but became a German citizen on the annexation of the western province in 1938. This was followed by the recollections of Charles Strasser, also born in Czechoslovakia but who left to come to England. Both are good friends and the audience appreciated hearing both sides of the story. Both spoke in English for the benefit of the visitors.

On arrival in Prague we were divided into two parties each with a lady guide, and in the continuing drizzle travelled on foot to see the magnificent castle, cathedral, and presidential palace before rejoining the others at the coach which took us to a steamer on the River Moldau for a lunch cruise. Afterwards, and again on foot, we were shown a variety of buildings of architectural and historic interest including the astronomical clock whose figures duly paraded for us as the hour struck, and the Charles Bridge before returning to the coach via Wenceslas Square, birthplace of the Velvet Revolution. In spite of the fact that like our guides almost everyone was sheltering beneath an open umbrella happily no-one got mislaid. Then back to the hotel for a sumptuous Gala Dinner to round off another memorable weekend.

#### Historic postscript

For those too young to know or too old to remember, Czechoslovakia did not exist until after the First World War when it was created out of the dissolved Austro-Hungarian Empire. The western province known as the Sudetenland contained a high proportion of German speaking inhabitants who felt hard done by the Czech speaking government and who provided an excuse for the annexation in 1938 by the Nazi Government of Germany. Neville Chamberlain was the British Prime Minister at the time who flew to Munich and obtained a promise from Hitler that this was the limit of his territorial ambitions. After the Second World War the Czechoslovak Republic was briefly restored until in 1968 the Russian invasion took the country into the Soviet bloc from which it was only detached by the Velvet Revolution in 1991. Subsequently in 1993 the Slovak speaking inhabitants to the east seceded to form the Slovak Republic.

**John D. Ritchie**

### **BENELUX SECTION**

Regrettably the Invitation to the meeting of the Benelux section held at Diest was received too late for any members of the U.K. Section to take part. In view of our happy association with the Benelux members in past years it is hoped that some of us will be able to join them again in 2002.

### **FLIGHT PLANNING PANEL**

Although events held by the other European Sections of IFFR are usually well supported by UK Section members it has become apparent that relatively few of the newer members feel able to take part, due possibly to unfamiliarity with the procedures abroad. Most of us were in the same position when after learning to fly we had exhausted the scope of the destinations at home. However there is a vast pool of experience in IFFR available to anyone who wishes to use it. Even those who regularly tour the continent by air have no hesitation in seeking advice and comparing notes with others. The recent trip to Karlovy Vary was discussed in detail and enabled us to agree an attractive route.

We anticipate that more members might take part if they could have help with the planning and have formed a panel of experienced members to provide this. In particular the Flyround Spain after the Convention next June, or the European IFFR meetings next summer should attract many of those willing to take a few days off to widen their horizons.



If you would like to discuss your plans with others who have 'been there - done that- got the T-shirt' as my children say, then give a call to any of the Committee members listed below and he will happily help you or put you in touch with a local member only too keen to assist and who may be able to provide maps as well as planning information and useful tips, such as how to make a claim for refund of the excise duty on trips abroad. Remember, fuel in places such as Spain, Norway and Czechoslovakia is considerably cheaper than at home, and you can claim duty drawback on your outbound flight. Don't be shy asking - we all began once but have never looked back.

## **WELL, WHAT DO YOU WANT ?**

There are over 100 members of the IFFR-UK Section, all of whom receive regular Bulletins giving details of events past and forthcoming, around the world and especially at home and across Europe. Yet of our members no more than a quarter have ever attended one of our meetings and a bare 10% regularly take part in any meeting abroad. All those who have participated return full of enthusiasm and frequently delighted at the moderate cost of the many pleasures they have experienced.

The Committee readily acknowledges the pressures on time and resources that we all suffer, but surely any Rotarian who is actively interested in aviation can spare one day each year to pursue his interest. We look to hold more one-day midweek meetings during the summer months in the hope that this will make it easier for those obliged to rent aircraft to attend. But how far are you willing to fly, and what do you wish to do ? Up to 150 miles - say 3 hours return ? City tours such as Stratford-on-Avon ? Aircraft Museums ? (Air shows are usually at weekends) Lunch at the airfield with an aviation orientated speaker ? Something completely different ? Tell us and we shall try to provide. We are keen to expand our membership and for that we need your continued support, and that of your ladies, family, and friends who are always welcome at our meetings.

Email, phone, or fax to any member of the Committee with your ideas so that we can arrange a programme for the year that will make you want to join in. The names are:

Ives Branson, phone & fax 01892-529914, email [ives@branson.flyer.co.uk](mailto:ives@branson.flyer.co.uk)

Angus Clark, phone & fax 01433-631585, email [angus@foldhead.plus.com](mailto:angus@foldhead.plus.com)

Ian Kerr, phone 01569-764989, fax 01224-212828, email [ian@grampian.com](mailto:ian@grampian.com)

Michael Pudney, phone 01621-772345, fax 01621-772877 email [jr43@dial.pipex.com](mailto:jr43@dial.pipex.com)

John Ritchie, phone & fax 01462-684941, email [john@ritchieiffr.freemove.co.uk](mailto:john@ritchieiffr.freemove.co.uk)

## **FORM HO60**

Flying is all paperwork but this form, unfamiliar to many, is one that you should be happy to complete. It seems that many pilots who rent aircraft rather than share them are not aware of the one tax concession that we still enjoy. You are obliged to pay Excise Duty and VAT on all aviation fuel loaded in the UK, usually Avgas for most of us. When you fly abroad whether to an EU country or to such places as Switzerland and the Channel Islands, you are entitled to claim a refund of the Excise Duty on all the fuel in the plane on which Duty has been paid. You must complete Form HO60 for private flights and send it with the fuel receipts for the amount loaded to HM Customs & Excise, Dobson House, Regent Centre, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 3PF who will in due course send you a cheque in refund. Is it worth the effort, you ask? The average PA28 holds 190 litres of fuel and the current rate of drawback is 0.2734 pence per litre or almost £52 on a full tank. That will cover the cost of half an hour flying for a few minutes work. We personally have already recovered £375 this year. It is that kind of assistance that we can offer to those unfamiliar with the procedures for flying abroad.