

INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP OF FLYING ROTARIANS



THE ROTATING BEACON



United Kingdom Section

WINTER BULLETIN 2001-2

**A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY & PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR
TO ALL OUR MEMBERS.**

Your membership renewal falls due on 31st December, and this year to reduce postage and administrative costs both at home and internationally we are sending your membership form for 2002 with this Bulletin. All we ask is that you remit £20 by post to the Treasurer or to the account of IFFR-UK at LloydsTSB Tunbridge Wells, sort code 30-98-77 account number 01783648 if you bank on-line, with your name and any change of particulars. Cheques to IFFR-UK please, at 84 Broadway, Letchworth, Herts, SG6 3PH. If for any reason you are unable to renew please return the form so that we can update the membership records accordingly.

For years we have been able to claim at least one member in each UK Rotary District. Now we have none in Districts 1040 - Yorkshire - and 1230 - Western Scotland. Can you help us fill the gaps ? New members in any Rotary District are always welcome. Have you asked your Club ?

Is your IFFR tie showing signs of age ? We have the latest edition in blue & gold on offer at the attractive price of £5 + 50p postage. Why not buy yourself one for your Christmas stocking and add it to the subscription for 2002 making £25.50 in all.

SUMMER PROGRAM 2002

When you joined IFFR you agreed to try and attend at least one meeting each year. Next year you are spoilt for choice. Why not make a New Year Resolution now, Note the dates in your new diary, book your aircraft and watch for full details in the next Bulletin. Prebooking forms for the joint meeting with the Yachting Fellowship are available on request to the Secretary. Booking form for Jersey on facing page. The hotels need to know the numbers now.

- March 27 Wednesday : UK Midweek meeting at Coventry to visit Air Atlantique
- May 3-4-5 UK Spring Weekend Meeting in the West Country. Further details to follow
- May 30-June 2 German/Austrian Section Meeting at Flensburg close to the Danish border.
- June 14-17 UK Joint Meeting with the Rotary Yachting Fellowship at Merseyside
- June 20-22 Pre-Convention Assembly at Jersey, Channel Islands. Booking form opposite.
- June 23-26 RI Convention at Barcelona, Spain, followed by Fly-Round Espana.
- August 23-25 Scandinavian Section Meeting at Billund, Denmark. Visit LEGO at home.
- Sept 7-8 UK Meeting at Leicester to watch Air Racing - Provisional
- Sept 13-15 French Section Meeting . Venue to be announced later

Opening the Season with a Midweek Meeting

Last year in spite of awful weather which followed the wettest winter that many of us have ever known, a successful midweek meeting was held at Sywell for the benefit of those members who can most easily spare time during the week but may have difficulty in renting aircraft at a weekend. If you fall into that category why not join us at Coventry. We plan to arrive, whether by air or by road (just off the M45) by 11.00 am and visit Air Atlantique, who still operate the DC3 Dakota aircraft beloved by many veterans of World War II. Then lunch locally and depart in time to return home before darkness falls. (Sunset 18.30 at Coventry). You might still have time to see Graham Sutherland's famous tapestry in Coventry Cathedral. It helps the Organiser to know number coming before the day, especially when arranging lunch. Please phone Angus Clark on 01433-631585 or email angus@foldhead.plus.com and try to make this visit whatever the weather. Nobody managed to fly into Sywell !

If you would like to arrange a midweek visit to your own airfield please let us know and we can add it to the Summer Programme.

Continental Events

In the last Bulletin we offered to hold Briefing Meetings for any pilots wishing to attend IFFR activities abroad. If you wish to attend one please let us know, specifying the meeting in which you are interested and the type of aircraft you will be using. We will try to provide airfield charts.

BARCELONA 2002

This may be your last opportunity to attend a Rotary International Convention, at least in Europe. We are all growing older, Rotary membership is declining, airlines are failing almost daily, and fares are rising by air or by rail.

Of course, if you have already attended an RI Convention you will need no encouragement. Remember Nice in 1995 - the Can-Can dancers at the opening ceremony and the display by the Patrouille de France and the Battle of Flowers on the last evening ? Or Glasgow in 1998 and the Air Tour of the beautiful Western Isles that followed it ?

An early decision is best for us all. For you because the RI Registration fee goes up by 20% on 1st January. For IFFR to arrange the Flyaround Spain that follows we need to know the numbers for airfields and hotels. If you are 'on line' the registration forms are available on links from www.rotary.org and www.iffir.org. If not, then the registration form for RI was published in the October issue of ROTARY and we can supply the IFFR forms on request. PreConvention Jersey Assembly booking form below. Arrive Thursday 20th or Friday 21st and depart for Barcelona when you wish.

If you can fly yourself, then bring your own aircraft. If not, take a jet to Barcelona (with budget airlines flying from so many UK airports this need not be expensive) and cadge a lift on the Flyaround, but in that case tell us now, seats may be scarce. If you don't want to fly then drive down to Barcelona, making the journey part of the holiday. The introduction of the Euro in Europe in January is likely to see a rise in the value of sterling thus making it the least expensive Convention ever. Above all else don't miss this opportunity - it may not come again.

Provisional Booking Form - Jersey Visit

NAME.....

Contact address or phone.....

Number in my party.....Arrival date.....2002

I can offer seats in my aircraft. Type.....Registration.....

For Jersey to Barcelona YES/NO For the Flyaway after Convention YES/NO

I would like to share a ride to Barcelona YES/NO

I would like to share a ride on the post Convention Flyaway YES/NO

Please reply ASAP to Graeme Le Quesne, Aptmt 3, St Martin's House,
Grde Rte de Faldouet, St Martin, Jersey JE3 6UG or email:

lequesne@jerseymail.co.uk

CONFUSING THE FRENCH

Following the wet Karlovy Vary/ Prague weekend it was a pleasure to fly in company with Angus and Alisma Clark in their Robin along the full length of southern slopes of the Pyrenees at FL85. An hour and a half spent in brilliant sunshine till overhead Pamplona and our let down for Biarritz. Whilst descending we were surprised to hear Charles Strasser in N37US going to land at San Sebastian. We did wonder for a moment if we were all going to the same event.

All three U.K. section aircraft therefore arrived at Biarritz from Spain, possibly explaining the apparent absence of our hosts. We did eventually find them where we should have looked all along -- in the Terminal Restaurant.

After an excellent buffet lunch and more than a few glasses of wine, the majority of the ladies were dropped off at The Chocolate Museum while the rest went to the DASSAULT plant where we were given a presentation on their world-wide operation followed by a tour of the plant. What was impressive was their increase in turnover in spite of a 30% reduction in Defence orders for Mirage and Raphael fighters.

The Biarritz factory produces only sections of each of the fighter aircraft as well as the mid-section of the three Falcon executive jets. These aircraft are priced at between \$25 and \$35 million - only middle of the range as far as executive jets go! The intricacy of the computer controlled processes for the kevlar and resin control surfaces they produce and the accompanying paperwork would seem to justify the cost. Then back to the hotel for a very short break before a walk through the town for dinner at the Restaurant Les Collones.

A visit to the Aquarium or "Museum of the Sea" as our hosts call it to see the feeding of the Sea Lions occupied part of the next morning allowing time to watch the wind surfers and shop. Lunch was of typical Basque dishes at the Restaurant Windsor in the town centre.

The highlight of the weekend was a combined Coach and Cog Railway tour of the Basque Country which provided spectacular views and showed us that this area is akin to parts of Switzerland. The area is definitely worth a prolonged visit. At one of our stops we happened upon a wedding in progress and were entertained by a local choir singing at the wedding. A late dinner at the Restaurant L'Operne in the company of local Rotarians ended a wonderful day.

A tour of Biarritz on the "Petit Train" on Sunday morning with a farewell buffet lunch at the airport rounded off another memorable weekend.

Feroz Wadia

Footnote

If you attend an interesting meeting, whether Rotary or Aviation, why not send a report to the Bulletin Editor. He is happy to receive contributions. If you have any comment on the Bulletin why not write, fax or email? The correspondence column died from lack of support. Write to 84 Broadway, Letchworth, Herts SG6 3PH
Phone/fax 01462-684941. Email john@ritchieiffre.freemove.co.uk.

In today's uncertain world many of us say a little prayer before we set off with wife and friends on one of those many IFFR trips that we so much enjoy. Here is one for you to consider:

THE TOURIST'S PRAYER

Heavenly Father, look down on us your humble and obedient servants, forever doomed to travel this earth taking photographs, mailing postcards, buying souvenirs and walking round in drip dry underwear.

Protect us from surly and unscrupulous taxi drivers, avaricious porters, and unlicensed English-speaking guides.

Give us this day divine guidance in the selection of the hotels, that we may find our reservations honoured, our rooms made up and hot water running from the taps (if it is at all possible).

We pray that the telephones work, that the operators speak our tongue and remember our morning wake up call for the sake of the others on tour, and that there is no mail awaiting us from our children which would force us to cancel the rest of the trip.

Lead us, dear Lord, to good inexpensive restaurants where the food is superb, the waiter friendly, and the wine included in the price of the meal.

Give us the wisdom to tip correctly in currencies that we do not understand, forgive us for under-tipping out of ignorance and over-tipping out of fear

Make the natives love us for what we are, and not for what we can contribute to their worldly goods.

Grant us the strength to visit the museums, cathedrals, palaces and castles listed as 'musts' in our guide books.

And if perchance we skip a historic monument to take a nap after lunch, have mercy on us, for our flesh is weak.

(This part of the prayer is for husbands)

Please God, keep our wives from shopping sprees and protect them from 'bargains' they do not need and cannot afford. Lead them not into temptation for they know not what they do.

(This part of the prayer is for wives)

Almighty Father, keep our husbands from looking at foreign women and remind them that they are on a 'fixed menu' and not 'a la carte'.

Save them from making fools of themselves in bars and nightclubs, but above all, please do not forgive them their trespasses for they know exactly what they do.

AND when our trip is over and we return to our loved ones, grant us the favour of finding someone who will look at our videos and listen to our stories, so that our lives as tourists will not have been in vain.

With acknowledgements to Letchworth Parishes Group Magazine

GORDON JOHNSON

We regret to report that Gordon, a long standing member of IFFR and a true example that you do not need to be a pilot to be a member of IFFR, died after a short illness in November. With his wife Mary he regularly attended our events worldwide and we shall miss his cheerful company. We offer our condolences to Mary in her sad loss which we all share.

SOUTH WEST USA FLYABOUT 2001

- A PERSONAL VIEW FROM ANGUS & ALISMA CLARK-

Each year Rotary International holds a Convention. In June 2001 it was held in San Antonio, Texas. At the end of the Convention the International Fellowship of Flying Rotarians, as is their usual practice, held a Flyabout. The aerial tour took the 65 participants in 22 aircraft on a 2000-mile circuit of the South West of the USA.

The participating aircraft ranged from basic Cessna 172 's to twin engined 310's. Our own stead, a 172, was rented in San Antonio. In motor dealer parlance it was an honest 1982 model. This meant that it was a bit tatty but it flew OK! Before starting the trip we had a briefing on the perils of Density Altitude. The hot and high conditions would introduce a factor outside the experience of the typical European flyer. To most of the British participants this previously had been an item of academic interest covered, probably inadequately, by our original flying instructor who knew as little about it as we did. The key lessons revolved around leaning the engine properly - sometimes even before take off, recognizing that climb performance could be severely limited and the importance of airspeed as opposed to ground speed on landing and takeoff. Even starting the engine at San Antonio where the altitude is only 600 feet required some leaning as one of our party found to his cost. A two-hour wait on a hot day to recover a flooded engine is not fun.

Prior to leaving the UK we had done a fair amount of planning having obtained the required charts and also gleaned a considerable amount of airfield information from the 'net'. The State of New Mexico was exceptionally light aircraft friendly having a web site with extensive briefing information available together with airfield diagrams and data. This allowed us to plot routes in advance and establish the co-ordinates of various waypoints. This preparation proved invaluable as it eased the flying workload considerably in what was, in all senses, a foreign environment.

The first leg took us from San Antonio's General Aviation airfield at Stinson to Big Spring some 240 miles to the North. Careful vectoring by controllers at San Antonio International took our mini squadron safely southwest out of their control area before releasing us to go north. The landscape was, frankly, boring. A photograph of the ground showed little difference from one taken an hour later. Interestingly there was a touch of deja vu here. Back in 1943 Alisma's late stepfather trained as an RAF pilot over this very same landscape. Among his flying memorabilia was a chart of this area. As we flew north we followed our route on that same chart - not much had changed on the ground - the ranch in the middle of nowhere was still a ranch in the middle of nowhere! It was the barrenness that struck us - not the picture of ranches with herds of roaming cattle that we had imagined, but more of bare scrubland. One of our American friends later explained that it was not a question of cows per acre here but rather acres per cow!

Big Spring was, like many of the fields here, ex-military and large. We ate lunch at a small, but impressive, Air Museum where the two local Rotary clubs had very kindly put on a buffet for us. We struck a minor aircraft difficulty when the key for the luggage door left its business part in the lock. No problem! The local Rotary President had a locksmith down to the strip in ten minutes and the job was done.

luggage door left its business part in the lock. No problem! The local Rotary President had a locksmith down to the strip in ten minutes and the job was done. Among the museum exhibits were a Harrier and also the nose section of a B52. One didn't give much for the chances of escape for those not on the flight deck of the latter – the ejection seats exited downwards!

In the afternoon it was a short 40 mile flight to Midland, but being the afternoon it was pretty unpleasant due the turbulence caused by heat build up. The scenery was now different – nodding donkeys as far as the eye could see – we were in the heartlands of Texas oil. Apart from oil, Midland is famous for the Confederate Air Museum and we were cleared to taxi virtually to the hangar doors. We were greeted by the Museum Director – a Rotarian – and given a detailed tour by one of the Air Force veteran guides. This gentleman had been an air gunner in WWII – not a career known for promoting longevity. Although the museum has over 150 aircraft 'on its books' only a small selection were kept at Midland. The others were on display or performing elsewhere. The aircraft which, ironically, interested me most was a Shackleton that happened to be stored in one of the hangars. This venerable, machine owned by Mike Collett of Air Atlantique in the UK, was cleared to fly under the 'experimental' category in the States. The evening concluded with a meal in the museum hosted by the two Midland Rotary Clubs.

Next morning it was as it was to be for the entire trip – up early to avoid the heat of the day and hence the turbulence. Another relatively short flight of 110 miles took us to Carlsbad. Slowly we were gaining altitude – up from 2870 feet at Midland to 3300 feet at Carlsbad. The airport manager made us very welcome before we moved off to our hotel – the rather grandly named White's City Resort. The city was simply a collection of buildings in the middle of the New Mexican desert. The lodging was comfortable enough with the benefit of a swimming pool to cool off in. The real attraction of the area was the Carlsbad Caverns situated a few miles away. These were truly spectacular particularly if you took the path, which descended a mile into the heart of the Cavern complex. The multitude of limestone forms ranged from the delicate to the massive, from candles to cathedrals, and from human to animal forms. Certainly the Caverns are placed among the highlights of the entire trip. In the evening we returned to the Cavern entrance to a fascinating lecture on bats by a Ranger while we waited for their mass exit as they went upon their nocturnal ways.

Next day it was off to Santa Fe, a trip of just over 200 miles. A curiosity on the way was the town of Roswell, famous for the reported landing in 1947 of a flying saucer. The town has 'dined out' on it ever since – it has little else to offer! The landscape in this part of the world was of bleak, largely uninhabited, desert. It is no surprise that the first Atom Bomb was tested just to the north of Santa Fe at Los Alamos. Having taken off early and not deviated to sightsee we fortunately arrived at Santa Fe in the early batch of aircraft. The controller was not used to this volume of traffic and was about to throw his toys out of the pram. Some of our group had to hold for fifteen minutes, whilst others were wrongly accused of disregarding instructions. Apart from being my birthday, which was celebrated with eighteen others in an excellent restaurant a few miles out of town, Santa Fe was our low point of the tour. Our hotel was basic but the most expensive of the entire trip. Our local guide, a Rotarian, combined the incompetent with the ill informed and the rip-off with the tedious. If we were to take what she said at face value the local ski resorts were rated as highly as

around the town at some speed, the dominant Adobe architecture was interesting, a statue of Kit Carson brought back youthful memories of Western Comics and we found out that the main railroad west never came through Santa Fe. It was only a branch line! What was entirely memorable for the right reasons were the bronze sculptures which were the speciality of an artists' colony. A group of children balancing on a log were so real you could sense their warmth and happiness and want to join them.

The next day we took a circuitous bus tour to Taos, which resulted in us not having time to investigate the town. It certainly seemed to have a genuine appeal. A short way out of town we stopped to see the Rio Grande River. Another childhood image was blown away – no rolling river here with cattle struggling across – but a spectacular canyon with the water rushing through. The day finished with a meal at our guide's home. After viewing the 'genuine replica' flags and associated 'artefacts' we 'enjoyed' a Spanish meal. Suffice to say we were glad to be on the first transport back to the hotel.

Altitude was now a real factor - Santa Fe was at 6300 feet and our next stop Farmington was only slightly lower at 5500 feet. The issue however was not so much the altitude but the heat. Afternoon temperatures were well up into the 90's. We were greeted by a truly genuine Rotarian at Farmington Airport which is named Four Corners as it is situated close by the only point in the US where four States meet. This well-informed lady, who was to act as our guide for the next two days, went out of her way to make our trip unforgettable. What a contrast! In what was a very hot afternoon we visited the 12th century Aztec Ruins National Monument. This Chaco Indian settlement had undergone a measure of reconstruction. One of our members, an architect, gave an impromptu lecture on the circular construction of the main buildings. This, he explained, was present in all the ancient cultures – the building form of the African rondavel and Stonehenge were two examples among many. What was fascinating was that while the buildings in plan were circular this had not been transferred to the vertical – hence as arches were unknown the openings, which were supported by lintels, were relatively small.

The next day we took a long bus trip to visit, what proved to be one of the highlights of our tour, the Mesa Verde. Here there was a series of Anasazi Indian cliff dwellings. These, situated 100 feet below the canyon edge probably for protection, dated from the 12th Century. They had, at the time of their construction, the benefit of fresh water, which trickled down inside the rocks to the living area. Unfortunately after a five year drought the water dried up and the inhabitants abandoned the site. Impressive as the buildings were what struck us was how primitive they were in contrast to what was the norm in Europe at that time or even much earlier. This reflected the benefit that Europe had derived from the successive Egyptian, Greek and Roman cultures whereas the North American Indian had been isolated. The state of preservation was remarkable but one could not help wondering how long unrestricted access to the site would be permitted given the obvious erosion. The day finished with an Independence Day firework display – it was only the third of July but they celebrate early in Farmington!

To be continued in the Spring 2002 Bulletin