

INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP OF FLYING ROTARIANS



THE ROTATING BEACON United Kingdom Section Special Bulletin

GRAEME HERBERT LE QUESNE

As many of you will already know, IFFR Past World President Graeme Le Quesne died together with his three passengers, John Festi from California and Graham & Josie Mockeridge from Australia, while taking part in the Iberian Flyabout that followed the R.I. Convention in Barcelona. The exact circumstances of the accident may never be known, but his aircraft struck high ground in the vicinity of Cascais Airfield, Portugal, in bad weather after turning back from his intended destination, Vilar de Luz, the club airfield for Oporto.

Graeme, a Jerseyman and a long standing member of IFFR, was completing his year as President of Jersey Rotary Club at the time of his death, and his funeral there was attended by most of the pilots who had taken part in the Flyabout as well as by members and representatives of the other European Sections of IFFR, who were given home hosting by members of the Jersey Rotary Club. At the family request there were only family flowers but a donation in his memory has been made by IFFR-UK to Rotary Charities chosen by Graeme during his Presidency.

Following the accident the Portuguese Aero Club under its President Manuel Silva Salta gave considerable support to IFFR and in particular to those most directly affected. By way of appreciation of their kindness and in memory of Graeme and his three passengers a trophy is to be presented on behalf of IFFR to the Aero Club. The cost is being underwritten by IFFR-UK whose members were most numerous on the Flyabout, and our treasurer, John Ritchie, 84 Broadway, Letchworth, SG6 3PH will accept contributions from any of Graeme's many friends that may wish to make a personal gift towards this memorial.

At the funeral, the large congregation lead by members of his family and of his Rotary Club heard the following eulogy from Charles Strasser OBE, past World President of IFFR which shall serve as his Obituary:

'Dear Friends

'We are gathered here today to say farewell to Graeme Le Quesne.

He was a good friend to me and countless others. His inimitable sense of humour and instant repartee gave constant pleasure to so many, as well as much joy and laughter. His love of Rotary and flying gave us a common bond. He called me his eldest son and I called him Dad and our resulting banter became quite well known.

Graeme gave his best to so many charities and professional bodies and the presence here today by not only so many members of the Jersey community, but also many who have come to pay their last respects from afar, bears witness to the esteem in which he was held.

He was a good Rotarian. He joined the Rotary Club of Jersey in 1980, following in the footsteps of his father, who was also a well respected chemist and Rotarian. He took a great part in all the many activities of the Rotary Club. Graeme treated his Rotary not only as a membership but also as a way of life and subscribed fully to the Rotary creed of "Service above Self" and the Rotary four-way test of: Is it the truth ? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build goodwill and better friendships? Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

For his services to Rotary and the local community and also for furthering the interests of Jersey internationally through the Flying Rotarians, he was in 1998 awarded Rotary's highest honour - a Paul Harris Fellowship. He had just about completed his year as President of the Rotary Club of Jersey when he was so tragically taken away from us.

He was a good Flying Rotarian, an experienced competent pilot and part owner of a well equipped Piper Lance aircraft which he used largely for his Flying Rotarian activities all over Europe. He enjoyed his flying and through it made yet another circle of friends in the various Sections of the International Fellowship of Flying Rotarians. Many of these friends are represented here today. His help to me, over many years, as the Vice-President of the Channel Island region of the Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association was of great benefit to all local pilots. He took over as World President of the International Fellowship of Flying Rotarians for a two-year period in 1996. This gave Jersey the unique honour of being the only Rotary Club in the world having had two World Presidents as members.

Graeme Le Quesne was suddenly and tragically taken away from us but he will remain in our memory with appreciation and affection forever. May he and his three Rotary passengers who perished with him rest in peace.'

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1st Solo abroad, a report on the Iberian Flyabout from Tony Erskine

Although I had travelled abroad with Feroz Wadia on two or three other occasions, I thought it was about time I flew as “pilot in command” so when the programme for the Spanish fly around was published I thought to have a go

Anyway it was almost 12 months away at the time! Time disappeared of course and with 4 weeks to go, the pressure started to build

The preparation wasn't too bad, and with our panel of experienced mentor pilots within IFFR I was able to plan effectively and safely for what was to be my longest single flying experience as P1, some 26 hour and 3000 odd miles round trip

John Ritchie to whom I will always be indebted was invaluable in his support, and as my work got in the way towards the final days, he helped by keeping me up to date with route planning and NOTAMS, even sending a copy of his routeing for the trip which I found invaluable. Filing a flight plan for all flights in Spain is mandatory so to save time John gave me an electronic format so I could prepare all mine before leaving UK just filling in the departure time on the day.

Not able to attend the RI Convention, Ann and I set off from Liverpool on the Tuesday and routed to Tours in France via Dover for an overnight stop because of an air display near the Isle of White. My 1st solo landing on French concrete was very welcome after 3.45hrs flight.

I found the ATC through France to be very helpful, much better than their English counterparts, nothing was too much trouble. In the highly recommended Mercure Hotel, we met with John and Mary Ritchie, Kevin Young and son Dominic, we all had dinner and our 1st local wine of the holidays. Before meeting up with the main party in Granada, we flew into Spain the following day another 3 hour flight, stopping in Reus and enjoying once again the friendship on board G IFFR. Even at this point I had picked up useful points on aircraft performance in the heat, fuel calculations and with 9 maps covering Spain, a good filing system.

Granada (elevation 1800ft) did not disappoint us. I found the airport easily, reporting at entry point Sierra at 5000ft! in the mountains and a run to descend to circuit height no problems with 2900m of runway ahead.

At the hotel the lobby was full of chatter of old friends as we met up with the full party of seventy odd in 20 aircraft. Checked in and changed we departed for a tour of the city by bus. Granada is steeped in history and has a large Moroccan flavour in its building architecture. The evening ended with pre dinner drinks within the bull ring, (I had never been in a bull ring let alone in the arena itself), dinner was served outside under the stars and seemed to go on and on into the night.

The next morning we had a tour of the Alhambra Palace which has fascinating gardens, and in the afternoon we walked from the hotel to a tapas bar and joined Neil Smith and Janet for lunch, soon to be joined by Feroz, Raye, Mike and Jane. It made a lovely afternoon of eating, drinking, and laughter.

On Saturday we all left the hotel, checked the weather which was kind to us, and flew down to Seville, again with a steep approach because of the mountains, but I needn't have bothered flying the approach plate so accurately, as the ATC was very accommodating. With all this flying practice my approaches improved and at Seville 3360m long I didn't bother dropping on the numbers, I flew on so we didn't have far to taxi

Again Seville did not let us down, the hotel was beautiful formed from a Terrace of Moroccan houses made into a hotel, the rooms were superb and the ambiance just right. At lunch we dined at a tapas restaurant with food and wines flowing in plenty. About 70 of us were there and we enjoyed a typical Spanish lunch time. In the evening we had a tour of the city in horse drawn carriages - a magnificent sight as about 20 carriages formed a convoy which ended in the Maria Luis Park built in the 1900 for the Exposition of that time. Flamenco show followed with dinner to round off the night

Sunday broke with a trip to Gonzales Byass winery in Jerez, the unusual soil in this area produces fine wines and Sherries drunk by Rotarians the world over Sunday morning without a sherry will never be the same again We departed from the Tio Pepe Winery for Cadiz, boarding a steam boat across the bay to Puerto de Santa Maria where we were greeted with pre lunch drinks and a seafood lunch which lasted well into the afternoon food and wine flowed plentiful for all.

Monday was flying (time to have some fun) we were off to Cascais in Portugal, my 3rd country solo Once the weather was checked we were off, as with the efficiency of Seville ground staff we had already file flight plans and paid fees on landing two days before The pilot pack was helpful having the route on A4 with nav log, it made it more comfortable within the aircraft, no going suddenly IMC as my co pilot (Warren Burrows) covers the screen while folding the map! We had a reporting point MINTA crossing the FIR boundary which as with most of this leg was on the south coast of Portugal. ATC looked after us well, the busy part was near Cascais which is north of the Lisbon zone where I was asked to hold while an expensive 737 sailed in from left to right. By now I was use to identifying airfields from afar, Cascais a measly 1450 metre runway was soon under the undercarriage. I found at this stage asking for information rather than in England being informed of procedures and reporting points. On some occasions I had to ask the runway in use, and at another not given the QNH, most controllers appeared to be controlling both the circuit and approach traffic, it wasn't a problem it just made me more aware. Again the airport was geared up for our arrival, soon the aircraft was refuelled although just 75% for weight and balance as since Granada we were flying with the Burrows. It wasn't a problem as the trips were on these legs were relatively short. On all the legs everyone got a job, Warren as co-pilot, Pat looking out for traffic with a running commentary, and Ann in charge of recording times and changing tanks.

We were billeted at the Hotel Citadel with a huge swimming pool in which I made a welcomed splash 10 minutes after arrival, and we all gathered there for an afternoon of eating drinking and swimming. Luis's son Pedro, an excellent tour guide, was thrown in the pool by the unforgiving Scottish contingent. Later in the afternoon we travelled to Cabo da Roca which is the most westerly point in Europe, and the most windswept! This was followed by dinner at the Rio Grande restaurant

The following day we toured Sintra, a delightful town with great architecture. This town was home to the Palacio da Pena a fortress built some 1400ft above the town. The afternoon was finished off with a trip to Lisbon and some free time to enjoy a very busy city.

Thursday came and back to the airfield for departure to Vilar de Luz in north Portugal. While travelling to the airfield on the bus I had the good fortune to spend some time with Graeme, we talked about flying, and families (his son spent his University years at Liverpool my home town) The weather was poor, so we didn't fly that day, and it was easier to bus us up to Porto, and return next day for the aircraft.

The trip was packed with fun and flying I learnt a lot about my aircraft and it's performance under various conditions, heat height weight and balance as well as procedure for going overseas which is more relaxed than in the UK. I found transiting countries easier than I imagined, fuel is cheap in Spain, and I learnt about duty drawback on travelling abroad which all helps to make flying cheaper. I would encourage IFFR member who have not joined in any of the fly-around to have a go - it is easier than you think and the help and assistance from our mentor group is priceless. My experience of the fly-around can only help make me a safer pilot.

My special thanks to Mike Pudney, who did so much in co-ordinating weather and flight information. We had our own personal unofficial tour guide Brian Adams who delivered an excellent history and architectural information around the sights. Brian accompanied Norman Beadle who shared our route home via Biarritz for fuel. The weather wasn't too kind coming home, Bkn @ 2500 up to the English Channel so we cancelled our flight plan and diverted to Le Touquet to take stock. It was comical to watch all the British day trippers fly in, and the 1st job they did was to look at the weather to see if they could get out again. I thought they would have checked the return forecast before setting off. Speaking to new IMC arrivals we learnt that the tops were at 5000ft so with the help of John Ritchie we found a route around the London TMA. After take off we climbed through and out at 4000 which gave us a nice VMC window on our descent into Liverpool EGGP where we were in blue skies. Giving way to the Duke of Westminster in his new Citation we put down on 27, glad to be home. Phew what a trip.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Dear IFFR member

We are now into a new Rotary year and I have the honour of serving as chairman of the UK section of IFFR for the next 2 years. I am keen to know what you the members would like to be included in our future programme and I would urge you to reply to this message with any suggestions you may have.

The IFFR programme here and in Europe and, indeed, world-wide is considerable. We have one further event in the UK this year which is the visit to Leicester for the King's Cup Air Race. Rodney Spokes has put together a good programme which we hope will appeal to you and I would urge you to respond to him as soon as possible but certainly no later than 21st August.

We have a number of events planned or proposed for next year and I would ask you to indicate interest or otherwise in each of the items numbered below so that we have an indication of potential support.

Firstly, we have a proposed visit to Brooklands which has been arranged by Brian McGraw. This is a one day event of interest to car and aviation enthusiasts alike and the suggested date is Friday 28th March, 2003.

Secondly, the UK fly-in will be held at Waterford in Ireland from 2 to 4 May, 2003. Local IFFR man Tom Sheridan is our organiser on the spot and you can be assured of a great weekend. Added to this, with duty drawback and cheap fuel for the return journey your flying cost will be minimal. As an alternative, take Ryanair to Dublin then rent a car.

The final suggestion is that with more members travelling to Europe, we wonder if you would be interested in getting together with some experts at a swimming pool so we can practise deploying and using a small liferaft of the type many of us carry. We would try to choose a fairly central location.

All of these are listed below and I urge you to reply to indicate interest in any of them and feel free to add suggestions of your own:

- 1 Kings Cup Air Race 7-8 September, 2002
- 2 Brooklands one day visit 28 March, 2003
- 3 Waterford UK fly-in 2-4 May, 2003
- 4 Liferaft practice Date TBA

Over to you. Please phone me on 01569-764989 and let me know.

Yours in Rotary.

Ian Kerr

STOP PRESS

Are you looking to move up? A bigger aircraft to enable you to bring all the family and friends to our events? Egide Van Dingenen IFFR member from Belgium has an immaculate PA32 - Cherokee Six - on offer as he no longer needs so many seats and is looking for a smaller plane Low hours on engine & airframe. For information Phone him on his mobile, +32-04755-74262 or fax for details on +32-1669-5888.
