

The Rotating Beacon

The Newsletter of the UK Section of IFFR



February 2014

A letter from the Chairman

Fellow Flyers

First of all, may I wish all IFFR members a happy New Year, and in particular, a good flying one.

Being a natural sceptic, I am wary of a number of innovations that are supposed to make our life easier. Computers are one of them, so I liked the report of conversation between a CEO of Ford and Bill Gates. When Gates asked why Ford did not have more automation and more computerised systems instead of relying on a lot of decades old technology, Ford's answer was that if they emulated the computer industry all cars would breakdown after a few miles and have to be re-booted.

I think that many will agree that many pilots are too reliant on new technology at the expense of "old fashioned" basics. This usually means that they are vulnerable if, or more probably when, things go wrong. Personally, I have experienced total failure of comms, GPS, DME, transponder, DI, ASI (twice) and AH (three times), so I take the view that the Boy Scout motto of "be prepared" is very appropriate for pilots.

As part of my belief in the wisdom of being prepared, I never fly anywhere without a plog with all the frequencies, how ever many times I

have done the route. I am sure that if the chips were down in a real emergency I would even forget my own telephone number! I always use a check list because I have a rotten memory, I never fly IFR without charts and printed approach plates. I use electronic as a back up. The final point is that when everything is planned well, you can do what all too many GA pilots fail to do, which is to look out of window for most of the time. I have had too many occasions when conflicting traffic has been too close to me for comfort even when under a Radar Info/Traffic service.

We are planning some venues for day visits during the year but would welcome more ideas. In the meantime, as you know we have our main event in Dundee. We also will have our first meeting with the Yachting Section which a number of us will be attending. Before both of these, I am trying to fix a visit to Bentley Priory towards the end of February. This has only recently become a museum. I look forward to seeing you on an event in the near future, but in the meantime, happy and safe flying.

Martin Wellings

Front Cover: The advantage of a high wing aircraft for a group photograph in the rain at Riga. Photograph - Feroz Wadia. Feroz also supplied the photographs for the Amiens, Lucerne, Riga and Europe articles

Amiens - aircraft, buses and trains

With Amiens just a short hop across the Channel twenty UK members and friends were attracted to the September French Section meeting. Raye Wadia takes up the story.....

It wouldn't be a true IFFR weekend without weather prospects pumping the adrenaline, but at the Amiens meeting all were safely in before the threat of rain became a reality – just as we were entering a nearby restaurant the heavens opened. Five courses later, the sky had emptied



Meeting old friends at the airfield

and the sun shone through again. How's that for organisation? The champagne and wines also deadened English sensibilities about communal toilets. A perfect start then.

After the booze - the snooze towards another aeronautical treat - a visit to the nearby Areolia aircraft factory. Areolia specialise in research, design and production of fuselage structures, plug-in techno-

logical solutions and specialist detailed aircraft parts, historically for their parent company Airbus. From 2009 Areolia separated from the Airbus Company and was ring-fenced to allow it to expand into a wider market. Now Areolia also design and build for Bombardier in

Canada, their first commercial customer. A new Canadian factory, responding to their client needs, underlines their commitment to become one of the top three specialist manufacturers by 2020.

Touring the massive site was just as interesting for the non-flying guests too. With a staff of 1400 here

and apparently high output, the atmosphere on a walk-around was remarkably calm and quiet. Large robotic arms and lasers were used for precision engineering, and we also had to re-jig our notions of scale when allowed up close and personal with different stages of fuselage construction for the Airbus 320, 330, 340 380 and 400. And I would just like to point out that watching some of the 38,000 rivets

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Amiens Meeting continued.....

(Continued from page 3)

being drawn into an A320 fuselage was even quieter than the snoring on the bus back to the hotel.

amazed and almost punch-drunk at the pride, energy, vibrancy and enthusiasm for Picardy. Definitely worth another visit.



The spectacular Le Souffle de la Terre

A short turnaround and we were off again to another large dinner at nearby Ailly-sur-Noye for a spectacular outdoor show, 'Le Souffle de la Terre (The Breath of the Earth)'. Over 700 volunteers, rushing through 3000 costume changes, brought to life 2000 years of Picardy history from Gaul to the industrial era in a kaleidoscope of music, lighting, fountains and fireworks. It was an epic tale of people repeatedly invaded and oppressed but always finding the strength to bring in the harvest and build again. Presented annually for the last 23 years, we were lucky to catch one of this year's 10 performances and came away

An early start on Saturday made some of us groan, but there was a full programme to cram into the last day.

First a visit to the Jardins de Valloires, a unique botanical estate of 5000 plants and shrubs, organised into five different gardens within the grounds of a former Cistercian abbey. With its perfect symmetry and ornamental hedges and trees, the middle garden particularly reflected the abbey's architecture and was a masterpiece of restfulness. During the week the former abbey is a home, school and refuge for children from problem families. The



Les Jardins de Valloires

local council maintain the public gardens organically in the style of

its original creator, Giles Clement. Thus the practical and aesthetic converge. The botanical theme continued with lunch here. The cuisine was based on the surprising taste of seasonal plants, vegetables and dessert - even the Kir was infused with rose essence. Our bus tour to the Baie de Somme helped us ease into a mid-afternoon nap (dare I say a few more rivets were drawn).



All aboard for Saint-Valéry-sur-Somme

During a leisurely walk to Le Crotoy, a former fishing port on a beautiful bay at the estuary of the River Somme (Baie de Somme) our guide introduced us to the story of the Caudron brothers who designed and flew aircraft there, creating the first aviation school for the First World War. They dragged their prototype by horse carriage to this beach in 1910. Among other claims to fame were visits by William the Conqueror in 1066, Joan of Arc in 1430 and Jules Verne in 1865 when

writing ‘Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea (is it a fable that “Nautilus” is here?). Huge tidal ranges originally created salt pans here, although now the harbour struggles to contain silt and vegetation with a ‘flushing’ lock designed 150 years ago. However the tidal variations allowed the first French investment in wind turbines, and the marshes have created an unrivalled bird sanctuary which

was obvious from a short steam train ride to St. Valéry on the opposite side of the bay. The train, running parallel to the ‘panoramic road’ which acts as a dyke to protect incursions from high tides, undulated like a drunken sailor through pastoral farms, the cattle completely oblivious to the wonky gait, whistles and chugging. A stop to change track provided the technically minded an opportunity to stretch their imaginations. And a bus ride back to the hotel was mercifully less volatile.

A lovely healthy dinner at a nearby restaurant was the perfect place to voice our thanks for the excellent organisation over the weekend, and welcome a new IFFR member. A quick romp through darkened alleyways afterwards and we were drawn to the city centre by the music of another outdoor spectacular.

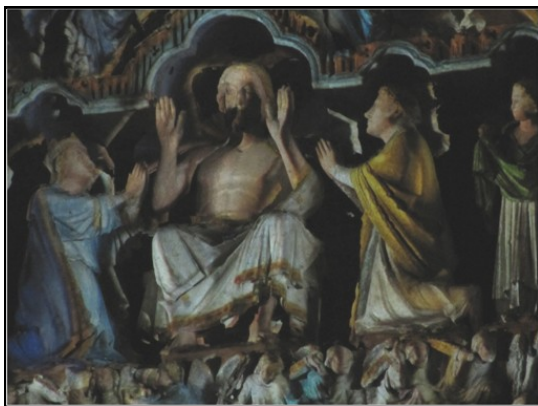
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Amiens Meeting concluded.....

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The main Gothic Cathedral, Our Lady of Amiens, was lit up by polychromatic and laser lights and high definition digital images. Standing in front of the tallest complete cathedral in France, purportedly one of the largest structures in

nance of such a rich ecclesiastical tapestry on medieval Amiens and the region. Moving choral music drew us further into the majesty and piety of the architecture. It is no wonder that it is now listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site.



The incredible laser enhanced stonework on the Cathedral

Christendom, we were awestruck by the rich architecture, particularly since it was completed in only 60 years during the middle ages. Outside masonry was originally multi-coloured.

Using laser technology we were shown the edifice as it would have looked in the 13th century. Ornate sculptures of saints and apostles and tableaux were cloaked in their original brilliant colours and we could only wonder at the domi-

As at the beginning of the visit to Amiens, the weather was an issue on Sunday morning. Although some members stayed for an exploratory tour of the city, others made a 'sharp exit'. And it was great to get a flurry of text messages that all were back home safely.

Many thanks to Dominique and Jean-Luc Brice who, for the second time this year, were

instrumental in making sure the weekend went smoothly. The main organisers, Jean-Pierre and Joelle Marteau are due a special vote of thanks for putting together an eclectic mix of events which pleased everyone - no mean task. This is surely an area crying out for a revisit!

Raye Wadia

(With thanks to Feroz for the photographs)

Norman MacLeod

Long standing UK member Norman MacLeod died aged 83 after a fall on the ice near his home in December. Angus Clark contributes this tribute.

My first reaction on hearing of Norman's passing was one of disbelief. I then realised that I would never again see that ready smile or hear that infectious laugh. Norman was always such good company. Behind that jovial exterior there was a serious man, a man who was always ready to give wise counsel and serve his community.

Although born in New Zealand it was in the Isle of Lewis that he spent most of his life. He was a man of many parts. He was, first and foremost, a family man – he and Dolly were the perfect match. He was a proud and loving father to his children Norman, Angela and Robert. It was a great sadness to him and Dolly that Robert, a highly respected airline captain in the Islands, was to die prematurely.

There was Norman the businessman. ND, as he was known throughout Lewis, established his electrical contracting business after his time on National Service. "ND" became synonymous with all things electrical in the Western Isles.

There was Norman the flyer. He was instrumental in setting up the Stornoway Flying Club. In IFFR terms he was, perhaps, best known for his organisation of the Stornoway stopover of

the Post Glasgow Convention Fly About in 1997. The 31 aircraft that flew into Stornoway were the largest number that had arrived in a single day since World War II. Norman later told me that that he had never been more relieved in his life as he was when he saw them all leave!

There was Norman the churchman and Rotarian. He gave a lifetime of service to his church where he was an elder. A past President of the Stornoway Rotary Club he was awarded a Paul Harris Fellowship by the Club. This was in recognition of his organisation of the

Stornoway stopover and his general contribution to Rotary.

Finally there was Norman the friend to many. Those of us who were privileged to be a friend will greatly miss this exceptional man. Our deepest sympathy goes to Dolly and his family.



Norman with his wife, Dolly, and his daughter, Angela, and her husband, Gus, at Norman's 80th birthday party

Christmas Lunch



Top L: Chief Guest Martin Robinson CEO, AOPA (UK)

Top R: Annette Lewis, GB&I Commodore IFYR (The yachties!)

Centre: Chairman Martin Wellings

Btm L: Michael Pudney, James Alexander, Rev.Vera Wadam & Martin

Btm R: The two Martins with some of the guests

Photographs by Rodney Spokes

2013 UK Flyers of the year

This annual award is given to the IFFR member or members who have achieved more than the others in the year. At the IFFR Christmas Lunch Chairman Martin Wellings announced that the 2013 recipients were Alisma and Angus Clark. James Alexander's nomination is reproduced below.

Husband and wife – Alisma and Angus Clark are both Rotarians but in different clubs. They fly a Robin DR400 from Netherthorpe. Both hold PPL licences and have been active IFFR members for 25 years.

Angus was World President in 2004/06 and both have been Presidents of their respective Rotary Clubs. They have participated in three American Post World Rotary Convention IFFR Fly-aways and joined the Brisbane Fly-away in Australia.

But where they have been the real stars is here in Europe. Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Lithuania, Latvia, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Ukraine, Austria, Poland, Spain and Portugal. Dozens of times to France and Germany, not forgetting Belgium, Holland and Italy. Stan Jesmiatek from Holland describes Angus and Alisma as “The couple most seen for just so many years

in the most places!” The question is: “Where haven’t they been?”

Angus and Alisma have everything organised. There’s no stone unturned.



Chairman Martin with Alisma and Angus and the trophy

Maps and charts; plates; alternatives, low and high; good, bad and indifferent weather routings. It’s all in their ‘navbag’. The same planning happens on the ground. The taxi is reserved, the hotel is booked and there’ll be three different ranges of restaurant to choose from, not forgetting tourist venues to dis-

cover. They also love a party and have been seen taking the odd glass of wine or two.

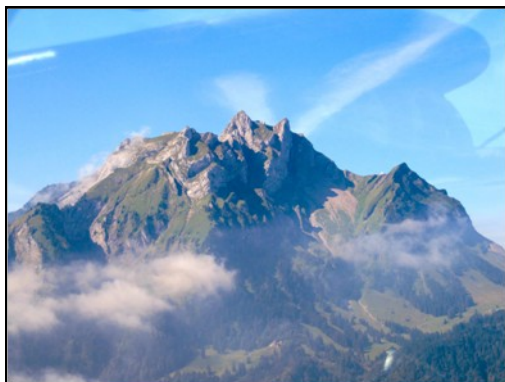
I have great pleasure in recommending that Angus and Alisma Clark be awarded the 2013 IFFR Trophy.

James Alexander

World President Elect

Lucerne - A passenger's viewpoint

The Swiss section held their September meeting among the mountains in Lucerne. Catherine Alexander tells how a passenger saw it.



Downwind past Mt. Pilatus

Flying into Swiss airports in mountainous areas is always an exhilarating experience, and Lucerne was no exception! However with my pilot James and co-pilot Feroz in the front I felt very safe. The approach involved crossing several mountain ranges, each a little higher than the last. As the mountains towered around us, we were asked to descend to a level which seemed to me impossibly low. After skimming a couple of ranges, we could see Lake Lucerne in the distance. I felt that I could touch Mount Pilatus on the starboard side as we rounded it, and suddenly there was the lake, with our airport ahead of us. It was the Swiss air force helicopter base, opened especially for our use.

There is nothing quite as exciting as landing and being greeted by one's flying colleagues who are already on the ground. While we secured our air-

craft we were treated to a fly-past by the Swiss Air Force helicopters, showing how they could transport first a Land Rover, then a huge crate, and lastly a container of water used to put out forest fires. A great start to our visit!

Our hotel in Lucerne was three minutes' walk from the river, opposite the two famous wooden bridges. Decked with window boxes of bright red geraniums they are the iconic view of Lucerne. Paddle

steamers and ferries cross the lake, ducks and swans leave their wake across the water, and Mount Pilatus towers behind the town. A beautiful



Helicopter transporting a Land Rover



Aircraft, aircraft and more aircraft at the Transport Museum

place. That evening we caught up with old friends (including Raye who had joined us) over dinner at the delightful fish restaurant Pfistern, which overlooked the river.

Next day we were free to explore the town in the morning: we plumped for the Transport museum which was reached by a pleasant walk along the lake shore. We could have spent days there – with trains, boats, and planes to discover - but it was soon time to return to the hotel, for our trip to see the Pilatus Factory. This is set in beautiful countryside with the backdrop of Mount Pilatus, and is staffed by delightful people.

The planes are mainly single engine, and famously used for the flying doctor service in Australia, and as air force trainers for jet pilots, by the Saudis, Indians, South Africans as well as many other countries. They are developing a twin engine version the C24 for

the European executive plane market, as single engine commercial aircraft are not permitted in Europe. We left with a goodie bag including some delicious chocolates!

In the evening we dined aboard the ex paddle steamer William Tell, on deck on a beautiful evening. One of the Berlin IFFR members had arranged a flypast by a friend of his in a Junkers B 52. It was quite surreal to see it approach and dip its wings over us! As the evening drew in we

saw the lights of the town reflected in the lake.... this was a lovely way to end the day.

Next day was our big day out. It began with an hour boat trip up the lake to Alpnachstad. We sat on deck enjoying the sunshine and scenery, and calling in at little villages en route to drop off and pick up passengers. Next we boarded the Pilatus Cog Railway, for the dramatic trip to the summit of this moun-



The iconic Kapellbrücke

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Lucerne concluded.....

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Cog railway to Mt. Pilatus Summit

tain. The carriages are designed for gradients of up to 48%. As we climbed, the views became more and more spectacular, and the vegetation gradually changed from towering forests to alpine meadows, to bare rock. We traversed streams on high narrow bridges and disappeared into dark tunnels. We were glad that each carriage had its own driver, as someone would need to know how to apply the brakes if anything went wrong! Sadly we went into cloud five minutes from the top, so missed the view enjoyed by Queen Victoria on her visit there.

We had lunch at the summit in the same wood panelled dining room used by Queen Victoria. Then we descended the other side of the mountain by means of two long gondola rides, and then walked back into the town. A great day!

But it was not over yet – that night was the Gala Dinner in the ballroom at the hotel Schweizerhof, redolent with history. Previous visitors there had included Napoleon! There were greetings from our world president Michael Graves, and from many of our flying friends from different countries – USA, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Austria, and a good contingent from the UK.

Next morning we left on our coach for the airport in less clear weather conditions. The air force Air Traffic Controllers came in specially to advise us with our flight planning and by late morning the sky had cleared sufficiently for us to depart. Another truly remarkable Swiss Fly-in. They are hard to beat. So save up for next years' experience!

Catherine Alexander
Experienced passenger!



At the Summit - but zero vis!

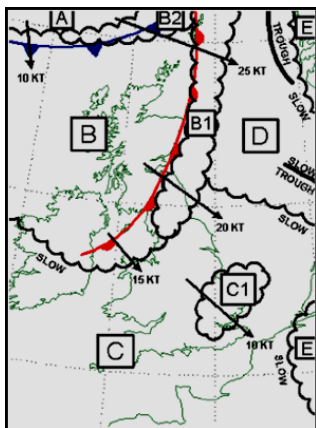
Safety Thoughts

**I am grateful to George Ritchie for drawing my attention to this item.
I will certainly put my hand up to say that I learned a valuable lesson**

George wrote:

A new learning for me came in the AAIB Bulletin issued in September. If you get a chance have a look at the report in the AAIB Bulletin 9/2013 . This involves a pilot who ended up losing control in fog and low cloud near Elmsett and crashing fatally.

The interesting part is in relation to the Met Reports. I quote the relevant paragraph from the Analysis section below, which is well worth reading alongside a look at the Met Office Form 215 for the day which is included in the report.



"It is not possible to know what weather information the pilot considered before deciding to fly but an extensive area of fog and low cloud was forecast on the Metform F215. The reference, on the Metform F215, to 'isolated' low cloud and fog meant that up to 25% of the indicated area could be affected. In this case, 25% of area C1 comprised several thousand square miles, and represented a hazard to light aircraft. The SAR commander's estimate of a 20 nm radius of solid fog is corroborated by the satellite data, but still would not have comprised more than 25% of area C1."

I have always assumed that ISOL meant that it would be little bits here and there that one should be able to avoid. Not that it could mean a solid block of several hundred square miles, i.e. most of Cambridgeshire and Suffolk, just because that is less than 25% of the region covered by any particular section of the chart.

Food for thought, eh. A nugget worth sharing with your readers maybe? Or am I alone in not realising exactly what ISOL means?

Riga - a first in Latvia

The Scandinavian Section broke new ground holding their August meeting in Latvia. Alisma Clark tells of her first visit to this part of Europe



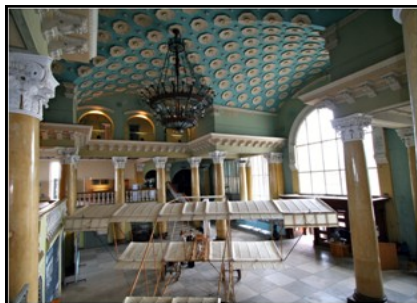
The approach to Riga

As we neared journey's end we passed the huge TV tower to the east of Riga. We then espied our destination, the old commercial airport of Spilve, in the distance. On the ground we were welcomed by our host for the weekend, Janis Andersons. He directed us to the old Terminal Building, a real cathedral of an edifice. It was completed in 1954 at the height of the Russian occupation. The building, now principally a museum, housed an impressive array of aviation memorabilia. The grand Arrivals and Departure hall was much as it would have been in earlier times.

We were greeted to a smorgasbord lunch organised by Daiga, our guide, who was to lead us around Riga over the next three days. The city immediately made a positive impression on us as we drove down its linden tree lined avenues on our route to our city centre hotel. In the evening a walk through the café lined streets and squares took us to the restaurant for dinner.

On Friday morning the group divided in two. Some of the fliers opted to fly to Ikšķile some 20nm away. The rest of us took a coach, with our guide, to the Latvian Open Air Museum. This visit gave a fascinating insight into how the farmers and artisans lived and worked. Many of the houses and farm buildings had been relocated from their original sites. All had been expertly built using local materials of wood and straw. The small wooden church was particularly memorable as it had been decked out with flowers for a wedding that was to take place there later that day. Our visit ended with a lunch of genuine Latvian food.

We then returned to Spilve to pick up the fliers on our way to the Air Museum. This contained a most impressive display, principally, of Soviet fighters and helicopters. The range of aircraft in this small space was amazing. After a



The plush interior of the Terminal



The Chapel at the Open Air Museum

short time we were off to Jurmala Spa city. The beach area was a delight with a never ending vista of the Baltic Sea. A variety of quality temporary cafés and restaurants had been constructed over the sand on wooden platforms. We were delighted to sit on very comfortable seats to enjoy a coffee. A brisk walk along the beach followed. Judging by the numbers doing this it was obviously a favourite pastime of the Latvians. We were impressed by the expensive, modern Russian owned, properties that lined the beach. This was a reminder of the Soviet presence in Latvia right up to the early nineties. Later we enjoyed our evening meal in a restaurant overlooking the expansive beach. There was a real carnival spirit about with music everywhere when we arrived back in the city. A highlight was an open air concert with wonderful operatic singing in a city centre park. It was a very pleasant end to a memorable day.

Latvians certainly know how to party as next morning when we were having breakfast young people were still leaving a pub across the street! We then had an extensive bus tour of the city. One particular memory was when Daiga pointed out the old KGB headquarters.

She indicated a door that her grandfather had entered never to be seen again. The walking tour of old Riga City which followed brought its history to life. One diversion was to an 18th century drug store, The Black Magic Bar. Here, after passing through a secret door, a moving bookcase, we sampled the special drink of Riga. This had a very high alcoholic content! In the afternoon we were left to our own devices.

Angus and I chose to visit the Museum of Occupation of Latvia. This covered, in graphic detail, the trials and tribulations of a people who saw their country occupied in some form or another from 1940 to 1991. It was a



Soviet hot jets of yesteryear

thought provoking afternoon. Saturday evening was something different. While we quaffed champagne we were taken by small boats through the canal into the main river and then across the water to a restaurant. We had a most delightful meal and evening of fellowship overlooking the river. Angus and I were totally surprised and delighted when we were presented with the Nordic Aviation Trophy. It was a marvellous way to end an unforgettable weekend. Thanks go to all who made the weekend so special.

Alisma Clark

Europe 2013

How do you follow an epic trip in 2012 to the AOPA Ukraine Air Rally? That was the question Angus and Alisma Clark, James and Catherine Alexander and Feroz Wadia faced. Angus gives the answer.

Alisma and I had flown to the Ukraine in our Robin accompanied by James, Catherine and Feroz in James's PA28R. We had such a fabulous time the inevitable question was what we were going to do in 2013. The Scandinavian Section was breaking new ground by having a meeting in Riga, Latvia. The following weekend the Swiss Section had a

meeting in Lucerne. It was easy – we would do both meetings and, in between, visit some other interesting places.

We set criteria for the stopovers. They had to be somewhere we had not visited before, they had to be spaced out to break the journey down and they had to have some historical interest. The places selected were Neubrandenburg in the far east of Germany, Ketrzyn in Northern Poland, Kaunas in Lithuania, Poznan in Central Poland and Augsburg in Southern Germany.

Neubrandenburg was chosen more for its position than its historical importance. Our hotel was situated just outside the old town's walls. When we passed through one of the four impressive gates into the town we were surprised to find broad boulevards and



modern buildings. Yes - there were some old buildings in particular the magnificent brick structure of the St Marien Church but the 'new' dominated. Was this an attempt by the old Communist State to create a modern Utopia? The answer came to us outside the Church which was now an art centre. There a notice referred to the vandalism of 1945. Further research showed that a few days before the end of World War II, 80% of the old town had been burned down by the advancing Red Army. In the course of the fire about 600 people committed suicide. Most of the buildings of historical relevance have now been rebuilt.

Next morning twenty minutes after takeoff we were into Poland and talking to Gdansk. We were given a direct track to the Gdansk VOR 140nm away and then a direct track for the 120nm to Ketrzyn. So why did we choose



A town gate in Neubrandenburg

Ketrzyn? It could have been because it was in the heart of the Polish Lake District, the Masurian Lakeland, an area of remarkable beauty. No – that was not the reason. It was because it was the site of Hitler's Eastern front military headquarters in World War II - the Wolf's Lair or Wolfsschanze. From 1941 to the end of 1944 this was the nerve centre of the Nazi war machine due to its proximity to the Eastern Front. Hitler first arrived here in June 1941. In total he spent more than 800 days until his final departure in November 1944. In January 1945, the complex was blown up and abandoned 48 hours before the arrival of Soviet forces. Many of the shells of the buildings were intact - where the explosives had been more effective they had succeeded in only shifting the 2 metre reinforced walls, rather akin to an earthquake, as opposed to demolishing them. The whole experience was really rather eerie - seeing the site of the attempted assassination of Hitler by Claus Von Stauffenburg was particularly special. Had a desk not been in the way of the explosion the European War might have ended

earlier.

Our next leg was a 2 hour trip to Riga in Latvia. Our route took us east flying just to the south of the border of the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad. After we crossed the border into Lithuania we headed north. Flying at a comfortable FL85 we had a panoramic view of the countryside. On crossing the Latvian border the weather deteriorated and we had to avoid some heavy rain showers as we made our way to our destination in Riga - the old commercial airport of Spilve.

Having been royally entertained over the weekend by the Scandinavian Section we set off on Sunday morning for the 140nm flight to Kaunas. Our destination, S. Darius and S. Girėnas Airport, was one of the earliest in Europe having been established in 1915. Now limited to private flying it was named after two Lithuanian-American pilots, who flew a Bellanca Pacemaker from the USA across the Atlantic in 1933.



Demolition at the Wolf's Lair

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Europe 2013 continued.....

(Continued from page 17)



Lithuanian Bank Notes

After successfully flying 3,460 nm it crashed, probably due to bad weather, some 350 nm from Kaunas killing both pilots. They are treated today as true heroes even appearing on banknotes. Kaunas impressed us all. Laisvės Alėja, the main street of Kaunas with its many outdoor cafés was created in the second half of the 19th century. At 1621 metres it is believed to be the longest pedestrian walkway in Europe and after walking the full length of the tree lined avenue we had no doubt about this.

Next day it was a 290nm leg back into Poland to Poznan. We had chosen the Kobylnica airfield as our stopping point after looking at its website. They were a thoroughly professional organisation, spoke English, had fuel available and were not too far from the city centre. Poznan was a harder industrial town than our earlier stopovers. We did our mandatory walk down to the old town. On our way we passed reminders of post war repression. A dramatic sculpture of two crosses one with the date

1956 on it and the other with 1968, 1970, 1976, 1980 and 1981 commemorated a succession of uprisings against the Communist regime. On our second day we took a train trip to the town of Gniezno. Its Archbishop is the Primate of Poland and it is clearly a town of immense historical importance. Unfortunately the lack of an English speaking guide and the day's torrential rain caused most of this to pass us by.

The heavy rain had thankfully moved on the next day for the 340nm leg to Augsburg. After 110nm we crossed into Germany and after a short distance were in the Czech Republic over the Ore Mountains. Flying back into Germany we passed to the east of Nuremberg and then to the west of Munich to our destination, Augsburg. After a meal



Memorial in Poznan

and refreshment on the roof of the Airport terminal we took a taxi to the city. Our afternoon walk took us down to the Town Hall or Rathaus. Constructed in the 17th Century it is considered to be one of the most significant secular buildings in the Renaissance style north of the Alps. No other word describes the ceiling of its Golden Hall but “stunning”.

Our next leg to Lucerne was one of the shortest at only 160nm but entailed a trip around the Zurich control zone and over mountain country. We had earlier been given detailed instructions from the military, whose airfield Alpnach was, of how we should approach. This we followed more or less to the letter. It was great on landing to be greeted by so many IFFR friends.

The weather on Sunday morning for our flight home was not the type flyers wish to wake up to - low cloud and heavy showers. At around ten the weather cleared and off we went. We climbed out towards Lake Lucerne and passed to the side of Mount Pilatus, its top still in cloud, and turned west. We were in the clear and set direct track for Troyes. On landing James, who was already there, gave us the bad news that there was no fuel but this was available 20nm away at Sezanne.

After a quick lunch we considered our other concern – the weather to the north. Instrument Rated James and crew said goodbye while we pondered what to do. We decided to fly to Sezanne, refuel, and then take stock. As we

progressed past Sezanne there was a distinct clear layer above the lower cloud. We were soon in that magical area of flying - clear blue sky with a white blanket below us. That was how it remained until we reached the Channel when the cloud began to break up. From there it was straightforward with us following our well trodden path to the east of Southend and to the north of Stansted. After just over 5 hours flying from Switzerland we were back on home ground at Netherthorpe.



The stunning ceiling in the Rathaus, Augsburg

Our 2600nm trip had taken us on a memorable journey through New Europe and Old Europe. This time it was not the cathedrals, the stunning scenery or the aircraft museums that had made our trip so rewarding. It had been the perspective that we had gained on the conflict of the mid 20th century and its aftermath. For some, in Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, the Second World War, in a sense, had not lasted 6 years but 50 years.

Angus Clark

Coming Events

2014

March 7/9	Joint IFYR/IFFR Meeting	St. Ives (Cambs.)
May 2/4	German/Austrian Section	Aachen
May 9/11	French Section	Rocheftort
May 16/18	Benelux Section	Midden Zealand
June 27/29	UK Section	Dundee
August 14/17	Scandinavian Section	Kiruna, Sweden
August 23	Vulcan XM655 visit	Wellesbourne
August 29/31	German/Austrian Section	Bonn
September 12/14	French Section	Quiberon
September 25	Lancaster taxi run	East Kirkby

For the latest information on events check www.iffir.org.uk

Dundee Meeting

The UK meeting of the year takes place June 27/29 in the city of many discoveries - Dundee

Ian Kerr and Paul Barnett have put together a memorable programme for Sassenachs and Scots alike!

Outline Programme

Friday 27 June

11:30 onwards: arrive Dundee Airport
14:30: Coach leaves for Glamis Castle
17:15: Return to Dundee, Apex Hotel
19:30: Dinner at Hotel

Saturday 28 June

8:30: UK AGM
9:30: Coach for St Andrews
15:00: Return to Dundee
17:45: Short walk to Discovery Point for visit to Captain Scott's vessel of 1911 the "Discovery"
19:30: Gala Dinner.

Sunday 29 June

Depart for home or perhaps do some flying around Scotland.

Full details and booking form at www.iffir.org.uk

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