

The Rotating Beacon

The Newsletter of the UK Section of IFFR



ENCELADUS



June 2015

A letter from the Chairman

Dear Flying Rotarians

It's almost half way through the flying year and I have been privileged to attend a number of excellent flying events. We started the year with a visit to the RAF Museum at Cosford. The threatened CBs and heavy showers restricted the number flying in and those that did made an early get away. The museum is an amazing place. I never knew that the UK built so many different aircraft in the post war period. Many were prototypes while others went into production but had a limited run. One of these was the Short Belfast where only 10 were built. The significance of the one on display was that one of our members who was there, Colin Ferguson, had flown it during his RAF service.

In April John Dehnel had planned for us to go to Sherburn in Elmet. Angus and I, in common with others, were unable to get off the ground due to morning fog. An alternative was quickly arranged at Sleaf for those who could.

Rodney, our Membership Secretary, organised an exceptional event on a Sunday in late May. We visited the racing stables of Mark Johnston at Middleham. A number flew in while others came by car. It

was an eye opening experience to witness the dedication of a thoroughly dedicated trainer and his staff as they brought the horses in their care into peak condition.

Angus and I have also managed to join the German/Austrian Section at Kassel and the Benelux Section at Ypres. I found the latter weekend a most moving experience. To see the simple inscription "Known unto God" on so many grave stones was something I will never forget.

Looking forward to the second part of the year Alan Peaford has set up an outstanding meeting at Biggin Hill on September 15. I cannot imagine a fuller day of flying related activity. I would encourage everyone to see if they can get there for this unique day out for IFFR.

*We will end the year with our traditional Christmas Lunch at the RAF Club on December 9th but more of that later.
Good and safe flying*

Alisma Clark

Front Cover: At Cosford Colin Ferguson meets up with the Short Belfast that he flew during his RAF service

RAF MUSEUM, COSFORD

MARCH 2015

The TAFs had been scrutinised the night before and CAVOK was very welcome. The morning TAFs, however, told a different story and the BBC was not giving out good weather news, but PROB 30 for CBs was not too bad, was it?



The 1 hour journey from home in Cheshire to the airfield in Shropshire was interspersed with brilliant full rainbows, wild hailstorms and precipitation that fell in visible sheets in the distance, plus the 40 mph HGV in front, on an 11 mile stretch of road with no overtaking places, and dire warning signs advising how many accidents there had been in the last 3 years.

Meeting up with my flying partner and surveying the hangar, with 2 heavy and unwieldy aircraft to be moved, before G-STIN could be dragged outside, coupled with very ominous clouds made the decision for us. We would drive the 30 miles to Cosford and a call to the SATCO cancelling our 9.40 slot was sympathetically received.

The M54 is an uninteresting road and the current crop of 15 mile road works does not add to its charm, but we arrived at 10.30 having been advised by the corporal on the gate at RAF Cosford that we were in the wrong place. A helpful higher rank showed us on his map where we should be and 5 minutes later we were parking in a “pay and display” outside the museum in what we thought was more expensive than Cheshire hospital car parks, but in view of there being no charge for entrance to the museum, it was good value.

In the extensive grounds to the museum are some of RAF Transport Command's ancient beauties looking forlorn and lonely after many thousands of flying hours and years of international service.

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Cosford continued.....



**A bit more complicated than the Robin?
Chairman Alisma sizes up the JP.**

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Inside the visitor reception area we were greeted by Alisma and Angus who rather unusually, had driven for two hours, due to a fuel leak from their beautifully re-covered Robin's main fuel tank.....now that's dedication for you! Some of our members and friends had flown, some had driven. Unfortunately through weather, illness and aircraft unserviceability 8 others had to call off on the day. We were 15 in the end, to be split into 2 groups.

The Cold War exhibition is housed in an aluminium clad, futuristic, Sydney Opera House, look- alike building. The aerial exhibits do not appear to have changed much since our last visit 6 years ago, and are still awe inspiring, representing military hardware from the late 40s to the 80s. We are all familiar with transport aircraft from our holidays abroad, but being close up to aircraft that had connections with our national freedoms was something very different. The mezzanine floor brought us

even closer to a vertically suspended shiny Lightning, a Canberra bomber hanging from the 35 meter high roof, and then looking down, we could marvel at the Victor and Valliant in their anti nuclear flash, white paint, whilst the beautiful Vulcan, still in its Falklands camouflage outshone them all..... the famous V bombers, now superseded by intercontinental missiles launched from silos or submarines. An Avro York transport sat on the floor with its massive square box fuselage supported on wings and engines that had been designed for the Lancaster bomber. We were told about its use as a coal transporter during the Russian blockade of Berlin, and one of our group said it had been used also to transport Indian elephants.

The next building was referred to as "The War in the Air" hangar and housed many prototypes and early models of fighter aircraft with a Bristol 188 gleaming in flush riveted stainless steel for researching the effects of skin friction on fast jets. A Jet Provost known by all in the RAF as a JP was very visible in its day glow orange and served as the primary trainer in the



The magnificent TSR2



Neil Smith, Tony Broadbent , Tony Evans, Colin Ferguson and Angus Clark beside the world's oldest Spitfire

1960s together with a Vampire constructed of laminated layers of wood in a technique borrowed from the famous Mosquito. The saddest sight for military aircraft enthusiasts was the only surviving TSR2, bigger than expected and said to perform beyond expectations. It was the No.2 in production and about to undergo a test flight, when a minor fault was noted by legendary pilot Roly Falk, who went for a coffee while it was fixed. Before he could fly it, the Government had cancelled the aircraft's development and ordered all drawings and building jigs to be destroyed. This was said to be due to pressure from the American Government, who had seen the TSR2 as a threat to their warplane exports.

The Kestrel on display was the forerunner of the phenomenally successful Harrier which earlier was developed from the "Flying Bedstead", an almost uncontrollable framework holding a powerful jet engine and not much else. It had been the first time that an engine had enough power to lift a flying machine vertically. A German Komet on

display was liberated at war's end and represented the Fatherland's lead in rocket powered aircraft with Hannah Reitsch at the controls. A few more months might have been disastrous for the Allies, with such machines being developed at an alarming rate.

Our guides had a wealth of detailed knowledge and were not stumped with any of the questions that we put to them, but must have found it difficult to keep us all together due to the enormous interest we all had in the many different aircraft and display boards. For anyone interested in aviation, this museum is a **"must visit"** Some of our group departed early due to the uncertain flying weather, and our journey back along the M54 was



The venerable Shackleton - famously described as "one hundred thousand rivets flying in close formation"

enough to justify our road transport choice, with some of the blackest clouds over our home airfield when we drove in.

Neil Smith

(Photographs by Feroz Wadia and Angus Clark ©)

Over Water Crossings

The summer months are approaching and the Continental meetings are beckoning. Martin Wellings gives some valuable advice for those crossing the Channel or the North Sea.

As with any phase of flight, it makes common sense to plan for any unforeseen eventuality. This is particularly important for any water crossing, so having the right equipment on board – and *within service date* where applicable – is vital. Next is the pre-flight planning to cross the water via the safest route, and lastly, a good passenger briefing so that everyone knows how to use equipment on board.

It is comforting to note that research and statistics have consistently shown that most ditchings are successful, and due to an airflow over the wings for a bit longer, high wing aeroplanes do not fare any worse than low wing. The greatest danger however, is hyperthermia which is inevitable even in the height of summer in the Channel, and in the winter months, survival time is measured in *minutes*.

Equipment

Life raft with canopy. Consider forming a small loop with a bowline as a wrist grip at the end of the painter in case the single rope slips through fingers and drifts away.

Life jackets for everyone on board. The best jackets are the marine types with crotch straps and spray hoods; jackets worn around the waist, sporran type, are not nearly as effective due to inevitable riding up too high in the water.

A PLB that has been registered with aircraft call sign and transmitting on 406 MHz with GPS position. Even if the aircraft has a fitted beacon, a PLB is of value in the event of the pilot and passengers become separated from the aircraft.

Grab bag containing handheld aviation frequency radio (with charged or new batteries), mobile phone (with D & D number +441489-612406 in memory), flares, heliograph and sea sickness pills.

Cushions or padding to help protect chest/head of pilot and co-pilot or passenger in front.

A hammer with pointed end or axe, to break windscreen and/or side windows if necessary – useful for any emergency in the event of problem with doors.

Two pieces of alloy tubing to enable doors to be propped open just prior to ditching.

Waterproof gloves are useful to have, for in cold water, the fingers will probably be the first to become difficult to use.

Dry suits, will always give a far better chance of survival in colder waters, and are highly recommended for the longer sea crossing undertaken in the winter months November to April. Assuming dry suits are not worn, everyone is better dressed in suitable clothing for the season – e.g. not tee shirts in winter because the a/c has a heater!

Planning

Avoid water crossings at night, as both the actual ditching and subsequent rescue will be considerably more difficult.

Avoid any over water flights in excess of 40 nm in the months from November to April. Sea temperature lags about one season behind land and the risks of hypothermia are considerably greater.

Consider the sea state. When crossing



the Channel at any time of year a surface wind is in excess of 30 kts. equates to a sea state of force 7 - 8 (a fresh gale). This would make a ditching extremely difficult, and therefore it is advisable to choose the shortest route across the Channel – i.e. via Cap Gris-Nez.

Flight plan between known waypoints (e.g. beacons) and maintain that track during the crossing. This will give you an instant track to report, rather than having to make calculations at time of stress.

Passenger Briefing

Thoroughly brief all passengers of exit procedures.

Explain that life jackets are to be worn and stress that they are not to be inflated whilst in the aircraft.

Check that all passengers are wearing their jackets correctly and know how to operate them.

Designate the order in which everyone will vacate the aircraft, and bear in mind that the aircraft may well not land the right way up. In a Cessna, the front seat occupants should leave first so that the back seat passengers can push the front seat backs out of the way to ease their exit. Due to the awkward position that the aircraft could end up, and the water in the cockpit, it is likely to be difficult to move the front seats on their runners.

Organise the person to be responsible for taking out the life raft, and advise them that it takes **a very firm tug** on the painter to inflate the raft.

Life raft should be kept on the back seat if not more than three POB, or if four carried, then it should be positioned immediately behind the seat and readily accessible in an emergency.

All baggage in the cargo area should be under netting or tied down to prevent them flying around in the event of a ditching.

The Over Water Sector

Fly at the highest available altitude/ level possible, as it not only gives greatest gliding distance, but better R/T and Radar coverage.

Maintain track as per flight plan during water crossing.

Carry out cruise checks just before leaving coast.

Have 121.5 set on box 2 as standby. Whilst you would transmit Mayday on the frequency in use, 121.5 may be required if you are requested to use this, or there is a problem with frequency in use. **Be aware of surface wind** and the

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Critical Point at which it will be quicker to return to either coast. Technically it is assessed as distance between the two points multiplied by the G/S for return leg, divided by G/S out plus G/S home, but practically on the short sea crossing of the Channel LYD/LT with a range of 40 nm, if 20 miles to run with zero/tail wind – continue to France, but if headwind and up to 25 nm from LYD, it is better to turn 180 degrees. If reversing course, maintain a reverse track as per the flight plan for as long as possible.

Maintain regular cruise checks – particularly carb heat (where necessary), temperatures and pressures.

Have emergency check list to hand.



The Ditching

Having chosen the ditching spot, prepare the aircraft. Unlatch the doors and wedge them open. Select flaps and instruct co-pilot/passenger to retract immediately after aircraft lands, in order to ease exit from a/c. This applies to high wing only, as with flaps down exit of the aircraft will be more difficult.

Land parallel to the swells in light winds, but in either high wind or heavy seas, land into wind *but land on the top on downside of a swell.*

Wait until the aircraft has come to a complete stop (it could bounce or flip) and open the doors if possible. It is likely that this will not be possible due to the pressure of the water, and it will therefore be necessary to wait until the water level rises in the cabin to equalise the pressure.

Evacuate the aircraft in pre-organised exit strategy, *and remembering the life raft.*

Inflate life jackets and deploy raft.

Speed into the raft is of the essence, as the shorter time in the water gives a much better chance of survival. Remember that passengers will have had no training as to the best way of getting into the raft, and some will find it difficult and may require help. It is better to drag oneself into the dinghy rather than try and climb aboard, and if everyone is safely out of the aircraft and near the dinghy, it may be better for the fittest to go aboard first and help others by physically pulling them in.

Deploy the PLB once everyone is safely aboard, remembering to keep the aerial in an upright position. Bale out as much water as possible

so that everyone can keep as dry as possible. Everyone should take the seasickness tablets, as bobbing around in a raft for even a short time can cause sickness and dehydration.

Have flares ready, but do not activate until an aircraft can be heard.

When rescued, particularly by a helicopter, it is better to simply await instructions than to second guess what they want - they are the experts.

Martin Wellings

It's no hassle to visit Kassel with IFFR!

Catherine Alexander writes about the first Fly-in of the 2015 season which was organised by the German Austrian Section, to Kassel, right in the centre of Germany.

We flew over woodlands and rolling hills on the approach to the brand new airport, Kassel - Calden. We were greeted in the smart terminal by many friends old and new. In addition to a good turnout of the host nation, and a jet load of Swiss who travelled in Thomas Morf's rocket ship, a PC 12, there were two Scandinavian planes. The British squadron, travelling in five aircraft, was impressive. It consisted of the world president and his wife, the world secretary, the UK section leader, two past world presidents, and the flyer of the year 2014 and his wife. Well done UK section!

After a pleasant lunch we met the CEO of the airport, who described its development. As far as I could gather with my limited German, it has made huge financial losses so far, and is struggling to secure sufficient contracts with the vast amount of competition from other airports nearby. He urged us, with great charm and enthusiasm to put the multimillion losses behind us, and to invest in its development. His optimism for its future was not shared by all the members present, one of whom was very discouraging in his questions afterwards!

We then walked a short distance to visit Piper Generalvertretung Deutschland. It is housed in brand new buildings. A

huge hangar in glistening white was filled with planes undergoing maintenance or for sale. Everywhere was spotless and perfectly organised. The maintenance tools were kept in colour coded drawers; all so beautifully ordered. We were served coffee and delicious cakes, (which could have been served off the floor) and were free to wander and



The impressive HQ of Piper Germany

inspect the planes. Apparently Piper Germany has never made a loss since its inception in 1968, and this company too is offering opportunities for additional shareholders.

We then were taken by coach to our hotel, Schlosshotel Bad Wilhelmshöhe. It is a new hotel, strategically placed on an escarpment opposite the castle, and has panoramic views over the city, stretching to the hills in the distance.

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Kassel continued.....



Wilhelmshöhe Palace

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We had a couple of hours' free time before meeting for drinks on the terrace, before dinner. It was a sunny evening and was warm enough to be outside. A formal dinner followed, with a buffet. The menu was headed "Ihr Buffet". We wondered if we were required to eat for one hour, and then realised the "Ihr" meant "Your" and there was no time limit... Our German hosts were careful to translate for us during the weekend, which was very much appreciated. We retired to bed, tired but with an enjoyable day to look back on, and much to look forward to the following day.

On Saturday there was a choice of activity. Those anxious to see the castle museum walked there across the park, and then were able to see the huge scale of the palace and the magnificent parkland and gardens surrounding it. It dates back to the reign of Hessian Landgrave Wilhelm IX, 1785 – 1821. Wilhelm wished very much to become an Elector, and

was finally made one in 1803. Sadly it was only three years later on August 6th 1806, when pressed by Napoleon, that the last Holy Roman Emperor Francis II dissolved the empire. Wilhelm held on to his title however! From 1806 Kassel became the capital of the Kingdom of Westphalia, a vassal state of France. It was ruled by Napoleon's brother, Jerome, who kept court there until 1813, when Napoleon was defeated. The building was badly bombed during the war, and was rebuilt without its central cupola in 1968-1974. It is now a museum of interna-

tional renown, and has among many other exhibits a collection of Rembrandts and other old masters. Our excellent guide showed us the highlights, but much more remained to be seen.

The views from the windows revealed the full extent of the gardens, or Bergpark. It is a unique landscape park "possibly the most grandiose combination of landscape and architecture that the baroque dared anywhere." A series of water staircases, follies, and ponds



Alisma about to take her glider flight



The beautiful grounds of the Schachten estate

stretch from the statue of Hercules at the summit of the hill to a lake at the foot. The cascade is now switched on three times a week during the summer, and is a spectacular sight. It takes 350,000 litres of water to operate it, so is not used in drought conditions. It was made a world heritage site on 23rd June 2013.

The other half of the party went to the Luftsportverein Henschel Flugzeugwerke, which operates a traditional gliding centre at the Hoher Dornberg. This is a perfect gliding location, at an elevation of 800 meters, with landing slopes in several directions. A few members had a turn in being towed up into the air on a winch, and then soaring over the mountains before landing again in front of us all. Alisma Clark was first to take to the air.

Both groups met at the Gliding Club Cafe for lunch, before departing for the highlight of the day. Karl-Ernst and Helgard, the Count and Countess Grote Schachten had invited us to have tea and spend the afternoon at their stunning castle. Karl-Ernst is one of the longest standing members

of IFFR in Germany. The sun shone on the magnificent wisteria covering the side of the castle as we approached the entrance to the gardens. On our left the lawns stretched down to a lake. Everywhere were mature trees, some hundreds of years old. Meadow flowers and mature shrubs lent colour to the view. There was a chapel in the grounds, where previous generations since 1570 now lie. At the top of the slope an archery field was ready for us, complete with not only a target but life size bears and deer (artificial) for the archers to aim at.

But first we were ushered into a tea-room, where we were served tea and more delicious cake. Then the competitions for the afternoon began. We were split into teams of three, to find and solve clues located all over the garden, and then to try our hands at archery. Competitive personalities used Google to try and improve their chances! We had time to relax and enjoy the garden before returning to our hotel.

At 7 pm were off once again, this time



The Jazz band on Saturday night

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Kassel concluded.....

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to enjoy a treat of white asparagus or spargel. This is to Germans what strawberries are to the English, and is eaten constantly while in season. Our host was one of the glider pilots at the Dornberg, who has a barn converted into a restaurant/function room. Mid-way through the meal we were entertained to a performance by his entertaining jazz band. He played the sousaphone. They were superb and covered a range of music.



Part of the spectacular water feature

As the weather forecast was extremely poor on Sunday morning, the Brits decided to stay an extra night and use the day to explore the town of Kassel, travelling in by tram, which winds its way through woods initially. The town as our hosts had said is not appealing as it was badly bombed during the war, and was rebuilt during the sixties – not an attractive architectural period! Armaments had been manufactured there.

We returned in time to walk up through the woods to the park, to see the spectacular water displays - and eat ice cream – an essential part of any IFFR outing!

We departed in good weather for the UK the following morning, having had a truly wonderful weekend getting to know another area of Germany. Thank you so much Guenther Hayn for organising such a great weekend for us.

Catherine Alexander
(Photographs by Angus Clark ©)

Footnote:

After landing back at Netherthorpe from Kassel Alisma and I taxied to our hangar. We then saw four uniformed personnel in hi-vis jackets walking up to greet us. It was Border Force. We had, as required, submitted a GAR (General Aviation Report) 4 hours before our expected landing. This was the first time in over 20 years of flying back into Netherthorpe from the Continent that anyone had turned up to check us. The check was conducted with good humour and politeness. Passports were presented, luggage was opened and examined and the contents of the aircraft given the once over. There were no issues and the encounter was over in 10 minutes.

Two members of Border Force also turned up at John Bowden's strip in Kent to meet him and Patricia on their return. Their check was limited to passports. This appeared to be a part of a co-ordinated effort as James and Catherine had a similar experience on arriving at Southend. We will perhaps never know what initiated this – maybe it was simply generated by curiosity as to why three aircraft should return at the same time from the same, rather out of the way, German airport.

Angus Clark

In Flanders Fields.....

“Would you like to come with me to an IFFR event in Belgium?” was the generous offer from my uncle, Feroz, that started it all. Never one to turn down an opportunity to go flying I re-arranged the diary and accepted. Little suspecting that there is always a price to pay, in this case an article for the newsletter!

The day began with Feroz collecting me from Blackbushe and then routing practically direct to Kortrijk. After a little bit of a squeeze (breathe in everyone) deciding to avoid controlled airspace between Gatwick and Biggin Hill

to each side and London TMA above, it was a lovely flight to EBKT with a tailwind (we’ll come back to that wind on the return journey).

Arrival at Kortrijk was uneventful, although as a student pilot, it was interesting to observe some of the more unconventional joins by more experienced flyers who shall remain nameless. I think I had probably best wait for more experience before discussing that one with my instructor.

After a little bit of a search, first for a log book to sign in and secondly and more importantly KFC (no not that one!) – Kortrijk Flying Club - we found the rest of the group and importantly some lunch. As a newcomer to an IFFR event the welcoming atmosphere was immediately apparent. To cement it all - once it was discovered I was learning



In Flanders fields where poppies blow.....

to fly the efficient recruitment arm of IFFR seemed to swing into action in the form of a World Secretary. I suspect this may not be the last I hear from Ian Kerr.

After lunch on the way to the hotel at Ypres (this, the commonly known French version of the name, Ieper is the official Dutch name) the coach made an unexpected but interesting refreshment stop at a helicopter school just outside the airport boundary. Whilst it may seem a bit close to lunch it was worth it as an opportunity to look around a nice collection of R22, R44 and Bell Jet Ranger helicopters. That afternoon we had the opportunity for a quick look around the town before an early dinner. It was more than long enough though for some to have found the nearest ice cream parlour!

The Menin Gate War Memorial was the impressive setting for a ceremony that has occurred there every night without

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Ypres continued.....

(Continued from page 13)



fail since 1928. The only interruption to this was during the German occupation in the Second World War when it was temporarily moved to Brookwood Military Cemetery in Surrey. That is over 30,000 times. The gate itself is maintained to an exacting standard by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission but it is important to note that the ceremony has always been a gesture from the people of Ypres and is managed and performed by the local fire brigade.

The gate is a memorial to approximately 55,000 commonwealth soldiers with no known grave. Each name is carved on the walls with sections for different regiments. The siting of the gate is no coincidence, the gate is located on the main road out of the town to the front line and battlefields of Flanders and most of those named on the walls would have marched through this spot on their way to the trenches.

The ceremony itself was very moving but somewhat a shame that due to the crowds it was difficult to see much of it, however that is a reflection on how many people are moved to visit it a century after the battles. If it causes enough of us to stop and think about the scale of what happened and the number of dead from all sides then that is not a bad thing. However one's hope

of that cannot but diminish when you realise that just 8 years after the gate was finished the same countries would once again be at war.

The ceremony was followed by an informative and entertaining walk around the town with a guide. It was an opportunity to hear about the history of Ypres before the 20th century, an aspect that is somewhat forgotten these days given its total destruction in the war. Of particular note for cat lovers is to avoid the story of why Ypres is associated



The Menin Gate



Veterans pay their respects

with cats. Let's just say the cats do not come off well at the end in that story. Neither it seems were the people asked to ride the wooden horse in those times. Perhaps our lives are not so bad after all! On the way we passed a memorial to the Scottish regiments in the war, who so shocked the Germans the first time they saw them in their kilts, that they called them the "ladies from hell".

The next day we spent the morning at the excellent 'In Flanders Fields Museum' in the town. Whilst the general history of the war was a great background, it was the day to day lives of the ordinary soldiers in the trenches that were vividly brought to life here. In amongst the terrible struggle to stay alive between the actual battles the top brass made sure that they didn't get complacent by sending them over the trenches on raids, just to "keep their fighting spirit up".

Somehow due to the imminent approach of lunch the climb up 230 steps to the belfry mentioned in the programme seemed to get missed! After a pleasant lunch in the town square we boarded a coach for a tour of the front lines. It is difficult to imagine today the lines and the setting of the Front as it looks so peaceful and "ordinary", but even today farmers and builders find unexploded shells and sometimes even remains of soldiers. A visit to a number of the key sites though served to bring it to life.

Whether it was the smaller Essex Farm Cemetery beside the bunkers where John McRae worked as an army surgeon and penned the famous poem "In Flanders Fields", or the large German cemetery at Langemark, or the impres-



The John McRae memorial at the Essex Farm Cemetery

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sive Tyne Cot cemetery there was almost too much to take in and definitely too much to put in an article. But standing there and seeing the grave of a 15 year old (amongst the youngest soldiers killed and must have lied about his age), or looking at the memorial walls at Tyne Cot (when they got to 55,000 names at Menin Gate they ran out of space and continued here), or the communal mass grave at Langemark where over 24,000 German soldiers are buried, were moving and reflective experiences for all.

Back at the hotel we looked at the weather for flying back the next day. There was some rough stuff coming in after mid day so the Brits, to a man and woman, decided to rearrange GARs and flight plans and leave earlier in the morning.

Egide and the Benelux section had been great hosts throughout and this contin-



Banner presentation

ued over dinner. A vote of thanks to the hosts by World President James and a presentation of Aussie IFFR banners by John Turner rounded off a great meal and evening.

The next day we had to pay for that wind that was helpful on the way out, but all in all another good flight back and a fitting end to a great and also memorable event.

Cyrus Wadia

(Photographs by Feroz Wadia ©)



Tyne Cot Cemetery

CORRECTION

In an article on the Quiberon Meeting in the February 2015 Rotating Beacon it was stated that Han Klinkspoor was to "be President of the Benelux IFFR next year". This was incorrect. Han is currently IFFR Vice – President Europe a position he holds for 2014/2016.

A day at the races.....

Motorcycling Rotarian Richard Lowe writes about the IFFR visit to Mark Johnston's Racing Stables.

My daughter, Jo and I would like to thank Angus and Alisma for including us in this IFFR outing. Both of us can lay claim to some Rotary connections. I belong to Angus's Club in Sheffield and also the International Fellowship of Motorcycling Rotarians. Jo went on a Rotary School Year Exchange to Texas many years ago. She is also a keen horsewoman and very involved in eventing, team chasing and hunting so the visit was of particular interest to her. We were both most appreciative of the welcome extended to us both by the IFFR.

I have always thought that pilots, horse riders and motorcyclists all revel in the freedom that their respective pastimes/passions provide and also the satisfaction gained from a well executed turn, be it with stick and rudder, a touch of rein and nudge of the leg or the exact amount of opposite lock and throttle.

The original plan was for the four of us to fly up in the Clark's aircraft. However it was not to be. The forecast of a weather front coming in from the North West proved to be accurate as by 8am the front was visible from my house and by 8.30am we were experiencing low cloud and light drizzle. We were consequently reduced to four wheels for the drive up the scintillating and picturesque A1M. Ironically by the time we turned off the motorway and got into the Dales the clouds were lifting and the delightful countryside and

villages began to reveal themselves in all their James Herriot glory.

We were met at Middleham by Rodney Spokes, and his wife Pam. Rodney and Pam have an interest in some horses trained by Mark. We were welcomed on behalf of the stables by Mikaelle. She spoke with a strong but unfamiliar Scottish accent explained by her Brit-tany origins and that she has spent the last 17 years working with Mark and Deidre Johnston, both of whom are bona fide Scots.



Vet Neil Mechie explains the lay out of the stables

We then went to watch four aircraft land on the beautiful grass strip. The grass was like a green Wilton carpet with a 4" pile and the strip was lit with lights operated remotely by an app on Mikaelle's phone.

Neil, one of the resident vets, joined us all in the hospitality suite for coffee. He gave us an informative overview of the complete Johnston racing empire before taking us on a walking tour around all

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Middleham continued.....

(Continued from page 17)

the facilities. I think we were all amazed at the science and technology that goes into producing a good flat race horse but 3400 winners proves that they know what they are doing.

Both Neil and Mikaelle were standing in for Mark Johnston, the boss, who had decided that an invitation from an owner to spend the weekend as his guest at the Grand Prix in Monte Carlo was preferable to meeting us! No contest really.



Pam and Alisma greet Rodney's and Pam's horse, Cassandane

The stable is now able to train and house up to 300 horses on three sites around the village of Middleham. The size of the operation is best illustrated by the following stats:

120 staff with residential quarters.

2 resident vets and surgery.

A synthetic all weather gallop of a mile and a quarter.

Various grass gallops.

Practise starting stalls.

Indoor and outdoor exercisers.

400 acres of pasture and fields.

Individual stabling with sophisticated venting and fresh air controls.

An advanced computer that records



Neil explains how you get a horse to use an inhaler

and controls the age, health, weight, diet and racing times of each horse under training.

It will cost you £69 per day if you wish to park your old Dobbin in this beautifully run establishment plus jockeys fees, transport, shoes and racing plates!

From a hill top view Neil pointed out the various gallops and facilities on the estate including a fine looking hangar where the two aircraft are kept. Mikaelle told us that their cost is fully justified as Mark and his staff are able to visit at least three courses in one day if necessary whereas before a race meeting at Goodwood could involve a tedious drive of ten hours.

The visit concluded with a convivial, though protracted, lunch where Mikaelle and Neil joined us as our guests at the White Swan in the centre of the pretty village of Middleham. We dispersed at 3.30pm after Chairman Alisma thanked Rodney, Mikaelle and Neil for enabling us to have such an enjoyable and informative day.

Richard Lowe

(Photographs by Mikaelle Lebreton and Rodney Spokes ©)

Diary

2015

June 19 - 21	UK Meeting of the Year	Goodwood
July 21 - July 24	50th Anniversary IFFR	Oshkosh
July 25 - August 1	10,000 Lakes Fly About	Wisconsin
August 14 - 16	Scandinavian Section	Svendborg, Denmark
August 28 - 30	Swiss Section	St Gallen-Appenzell
September 15	BGAD	Biggin Hill
September 17 - 20	French Section	Lens
October 22	Sherburn in Elmet	Fly in for lunch and a chat
December 9	Christmas Lunch	RAF Club, London

2016

June 17-19	UK Meeting of the Year	Jersey
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For the latest information on events check www.iffir.org.uk

.....and then we went to Sleep

John Dehnel had organised an interesting mid-week meeting in April at Sherburn in Elmet. The people there were all ready to welcome us but.....

The Vale of York where Sherburn lies gave its usual response to a fine Spring day - morning fog!

At various airfields around England we also waited for the fog to clear. Yes, you convince yourself that the most recent Metar was better than the last. With the temperature and dew point remaining stubbornly close together there was, however, little prospect of an early improvement.

Those on the east side of the country from Netherthorpe to Humberside to Henlow waited in vain for their airfields to clear. Those in the Midlands and the West were more fortunate.

By late morning Plan B was put into action. Sleep in Shropshire was gin

clear. Three aircraft went there instead. John Dehnel from Leicester, David Morgan from Halfpenny Green and James Alexander from Cark with their guests enjoyed lunch and some fellowship.



James Alexander, Tony Nelson, John Dehnel and David Morgan at Sleep

Coming Event

Alan Peaford has put together an exceptional programme at Biggin Hill in conjunction with the BGAD Exhibition on September 15. Space permits but a summary of the activity packed day.

Arrival of the registered aircraft will be between 10:00 and 10:30. Landing and parking is free. Pilots and guests will meet up with those who have driven for coffee at the Lookout Café.

We will then visit St George's Chapel. Last year IFFR members participated in the online petition to save the chapel from MoD cuts. The chapel features memorials to British and overseas squadrons who fought in the Battle of Britain. There are many artefacts and images to remind us of their sacrifice.

Moving on to RizonJet, the award-winning VVIP private aviation centre, we will have a tour of the incredible 7-star facility. This will include a hangar skywalk over the executive jets ...and Spitfires that are cared for here. After lunch the CEO of RizonJet will give a short talk about business aviation

We will then be taken to the Heritage Hangar where there are flying Spitfires, a Hurricane, and other wartime aircraft such as the Me109 under restoration. This is the company that is currently offering 20-minute flight experiences in the two-stick Spitfire (for a price).

A visit to the home of 'Shipping and Airlines' Historic Aircraft Collection will follow. Vintage aircraft here in-

clude the DH Dragonfly; the Civilian Coupé, a DH Hornet Moth, a Miles Messenger and a Rearwin Sportster.

After this we will be taken to where the BGAD (The UK Business and General Aviation Day) exhibition is being held with its seminars, exhibition booths and displays of aircraft. IFFR members will be given free entry to the event.

At 18:00 there will be a reception followed by a flying display of historic aircraft as a tribute to the Battle of Britain anniversary. The display and the day will end at 20:00. Full details will be circulated to members shortly.

The International Fellowship of Flying Rotarians (UK Section)

Chairman:

Alisma Clark (alismac@me.com)

Tel. 01433 631585

Company Secretary/ Treasurer:

John Bowden (john.bowden@cwj.co.uk)

Tel. 01892 862531

Membership Secretary:

Rodney Spokes (flyer@spokes.biz) 7 The Albany, London Road, Leicester LE2 1RH, Tel. 0116 270 4710

Bulletin Editor:

Angus Clark (clark.calver@gmail.com)

Tel. 01433 631585

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