

# *The* **Rotating Beacon**



Enjoy our reports insides from around UK, Europe and USA

Help us make membership to IFFR awesome

*You provide the transport, we provide the refreshments and the sights!*

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# A letter from the Chairman

March 2019

Dear Flying Rotarians & Friends

Jashu & I hope you had an enjoyable time over the festive season and have not suffered too much with the "winter blues". Certainly there was good weather during February, but at the time of writing this letter here on the east coast, we have very strong cold winds bucketing down & a poor forecast for the next week. I expect most of us have carried out the necessary winter maintenance and jobs to spruce the aircraft up, ready for plenty of safe and enjoyable flying. I am looking forward to the IFFR flying events both UK & abroad. After having a great time in Sweden last year Jashu & I are keen to meet up with our friends again & have booked for Vilnius in August. If you haven't yet visited another sections' event, I would urge you to consider it to attend either by flying yourself or by a commercial flight. We always have wonderful fellowship & see places maybe we would not normally consider visiting. So far I have decided to attend the Benelux & Swiss events as well. Here in UK we are organising monthly fly-in events to now include some at weekends, these will be announced very shortly on our website, so please keep looking. Again if you haven't yet been to one of our fly-ins please do try to come, it's a nice informal day out, lunch available and good fellowship. If you have any ideas for a fly-in please do let me know.

We have a large membership, its strength being shown at recent AGM events with already the Isle of Wight being fully booked. However, we do need more involvement from our membership with the day to day running of our UK section. This can be achieved by becoming a member of the committee (not a demanding role) offering to help with events, taking a co-ordinating role to help those members who attend events. An example is - Angus Clark has been coordinating foreign trips, rendezvous points, suggested routes etc. which has been of great help which certainly encouraged me in my early days of going abroad. Angus would like someone to take this on. Please do consider offering help to our organisation, to become involved, to use your experience & skills which I am sure will help to maintain the success of our section. IFFR UK NEEDS YOU – contact either Peter Jude (Chair), Rodney Spokes (Membership), George Ritchie (Website), Duncan Moffatt (Rotating Beacon).

Since my last letter, we have had our annual Christmas Lunch at the Royal Air Force Club. Once again it was a resounding success with increased numbers. Peter Greenyer gave us an excellent & humorous talk about his vintage aircraft collection at Biggin Hill. We were honoured by the presence of

World President Phil Pacey & wife Judy. My thanks again to Diana & John for facilitating & organising this event, which will again be at the RAF Club in December this year.

My thanks go to George Ritchie who has taken on responsibility for our UK website. He is re-modelling & updating it. Your committee has had a brief look at its progress which when it's finished will be a great improvement.

OFFICE OF TREASURER – our long serving Treasurer/ Company Secretary is to stand down at the AGM this year. He has done a great job in both roles. On behalf of our membership I again want to thank him for keeping a tight ship and for the commitment given. We need someone to take over from John so PLEASE CONSIDER taking on this role which is not too demanding or time consuming. John has said he will ensure his successor has a proper handover from him and will be available to answer any queries that may arise.

Good News – As you know my term of office finishes at our next AGM. At our last committee meeting Tony Flinn confirmed that he is willing to stand for Chairman 2019/21. He is a member of our UK committee, attends events here & abroad with his wife Rosemary.

That's enough for now. I am looking forward to seeing many of you throughout the year and once again, please do consider what help or support you can make no matter how small to our UK Section.

Sincerely & yours in Rotary

*Peter*

Chairman.



# World President

**Phil Pacey - New Zealand**

Warm greetings from New Zealand and the South Pacific where our flying season is just getting started.

It's been a busy few months for Judy and me as we've travelled to various events around the world with plenty more still to come.

## **Australasian fly-ins in Melbourne, Australia and Stratford New Zealand:**

Judy and I first headed for the Melbourne fly in from October 12-14. I was lucky enough to catch the Bathurst 1000 Motor Race on the way, before we drove around the Southern coast of Australia to Melbourne. The fly-in was ably organised by past chairman of IFFR Australia Mike McFarlane and his wife Sali and we had a wonderful time.

Our local New Zealand event from 26 to 29 November in Stratford (West Coast of the North Island) unfortunately turned into a drive-in due to a dismal weather forecast. The background to the photo of my Cessna 206 in the last newsletter shows the area on a good day, but unfortunately we weren't so lucky this time. Nevertheless, NZ president Garry Goodman ran a successful and worthwhile event with the help of Michael Bryant and Eric Linklater.

Don't miss the full details of these two events later in the newsletter.



## **Hong Kong Squadron first anniversary celebrations: 3-8 November 2018:**

Our next adventure was to visit Hong Kong to celebrate with the first anniversary of the Hong Kong Squadron. For the first anniversary dinner we enjoyed a fabulous banquet with cake cutting and many toasts. There were also entertaining talks from Lilly Fenn on her exploits in Africa and from Captain Michael Chan about acquiring new helicopters for the Hong Kong government, and receiving an international award for his Flying Services efforts during the recent typhoon. I presented the Hong Kong Squadron with a plaque from the IFFR to mark the occasion.

We were honoured to be invited to the combined 60th birthday and 32nd wedding anniversary celebrations of Hong Kong Charter President Eric Chin and his wife Christine, and what an amazing party it was! We joined his family and many Rotary friends at the Hong Kong Football Club – a fantastic venue packed with a more than a century's worth of sporting memorabilia.







Eric and Christine joined Judy and me on our visit to the China Airshow at Zhuhai Airport. We arrived via the new Hong Kong–Zhuhai–Macau Bridge (HZMB) which is made up of a 55-kilometre bridge–tunnel system consisting of a series of three cable-stayed bridges, an undersea tunnel, and four artificial islands. It is both the longest sea crossing and the longest fixed link on earth. This \$20 billion mega-infrastructure project was only started in 2011 and is truly breath-taking in its scale. It is currently open only to drivers with special permits, so when we arrived at the Chinese border post set up to handle thousands of cars per hour, ours was the only vehicle – quite spooky! Eric jokingly suggested that the bridge had been temporarily closed to allow the IFRR world president to cross.....hmmmm!

Once in China we met up with fellow Rotarians Penny Wong and Annie Fong who escorted us to the Airshow. To say I was impressed by what I saw there in the way of aircraft and military hardware would be a massive understatement – it was truly awe-inspiring and more than a little terrifying. We saw military hardware ranging from small arms to

what appeared to be mobile ballistic missile launchers – and everything in between. I noticed quite a few attendees in military uniforms from around the world, complete with their entourages. There were also many Russian-designed jet fighters and bombers and many armed drones including a 5-ton MIL Helicopter converted to a drone.

On the civil aviation side we saw a massive AG600 amphibian powered by four 6-bladed WJ-6 turboprops. It looked like a civilian airliner with a boat attached beneath it and was a spectacular sight (I was told off for taking too many photos!). Alongside the Mooneys and Airvans there were some interesting copies -a three-door, five-seat Cirrus copy and a brand-new Cessna 152 copy with three seats and a 0.235 motor.

The Airshow really was like a Disneyland for pilots and they almost had to drag me away. My only disappointment was that I didn't see the thrust-vectoring fighters as we were in the entrance hall although we certainly heard them! I'm hugely grateful for the efforts of Eric and Michael to get the tickets and to Penny and Annie for helping us with translations as we went around.

After all that excitement it was very nice to spend the evening relaxing with the group at the Zhongshan Hot Spring Resort nestled at the southern foot of Luosanmei Mountain, Sanxiang Town, Zhongshan City. The resort is quite large and absolutely beautiful with stunning views of the mountain and lake. The following day we did some sightseeing at the 15th Century Whampoa port and museum before returning to Hong Kong on the high-speed train reaching 307km/hr, which was pretty impressive.



## Upcoming events:

- For us the next trip is already underway – We'll be joining the UK Section for their Christmas lunch which we are greatly looking forward to. Look out for a full report in the next newsletter.
- I hope to see many of you at the convention in Hamburg from the 1st to the 6th of June 2019 where we will hold the Annual General Meeting and Banquet for members. There will also be a fly-away after the event which is set to be a fantastic experience for those who can take part. Please see the full details in the report below, including how you can register.
- I would encourage you all to check the web <http://iffr.org/events/> for fly-ins near you or near to where you may travel.

As you can see, Judy and I have certainly been clocking up the air miles visiting the various chapters around the world. It's an immense privilege to be the president of this fantastic organisation, and despite a dose of airline flu we're determined to visit as many sections as possible in Europe and the Americas during the northern summer in 2019.

I've been made aware that some members of our fellowship have been caught up in the recent California fires and the earthquake in Alaska. Judy and I wanted to pass on our thoughts to all those affected and our thanks to those members who have been helping in any way they can.

*And remember:* **Fly Well • Fly Safe • Fly Often**

Phil Pacey

WP - International Fellowship of Flying Rotarians

## A message to the UK Section from the World President after his visit.

Dear Peter,

Judy and I would like to thank you for inviting us to be guests of the UK Section at the Christmas lunch.

We were both completely blown away by the venue which we were privileged to also stay at. You certainly head an amazing group within our Fellowship and we enjoyed meeting many old acquaintances from the British Isles and Europe.

Please pass on our thanks to your Committee for their efforts in hosting this event.

I have written to John Davy separately.

Wishing you and your family a very Merry Christmas.

Kind regards,

Phil and Judy Pacey

WP IFFR

## New IFFR Database

### Use of our IFFR database of all members - It's called Membermojo

You can update your details and find details of other members – here's how

#### To log in from a computer or tablet:

1. Go to [iffr.org](http://iffr.org)
2. Press the tab at the top on the home page with label 'Membermojo'
3. On the next page enter your email address and select 'Sign in with email'. Only your address held in Membermojo is recognised.
4. Within a minute you will receive an email – in the email message press 'click here to sign in'.

#### To log in from a mobile phone:

1. Go to [iffr.org](http://iffr.org)
2. Press the button with lines on the right side of the blue bar at the top and press the Word 'Membermojo'

Continue as from number 3 above

**You can also enter [membermojo.co.uk/iffr](http://membermojo.co.uk/iffr) into your browser which takes you direct to the sign in page.**

#### Check your details and upload a photo:

Select 'Your membership' and scroll down to 'My details' and select 'View or edit details' to see your own full entry. If you select 'Edit' at the bottom you can amend any of your details and upload a photo then press 'Save' at the bottom to save all changes.

#### How to find details of other IFFR members:

Select 'Your membership' and scroll down to select 'Member directory' – you can enter a name of any IFFR member in the world in the box, using last name followed by first name, and when it displays in an orange colour press on the name and you will see the member's details. You can return to 'Your membership' page at any time to select another member.

If you wish you can select 'Set password' under 'Your membership' but this is not necessary as you can simply sign in using your email address. However, a password speeds up access.

Please ignore the 'Payments' option as payments are made via your section.

Ian Kerr

World Secretary



## French Fly-in to Epinal 2018

Fellow pilot Paul Howell and I departed from Sandtoft aerodrome, North Lincolnshire intending to fly to Calais-Dunkerque, refuel and go through customs there. The initial flight south was relatively uneventful until we crossed the Thames and flew into IMC conditions over north Kent. An immediate 180 degree turn took us back into VFR and a decision was made to take a weather diversion to Stapleford where we sat out the weather improvement for a couple of hours and re-filed the flight plan to Calais. At Stapleford the Weather was beautiful with clear blue skies and apparently improving at the coast and seemingly OK through France. We set off just before noon and it was obvious that conditions were better but not perfect and crossing the southern part of the channel at 1300 ft in lowering clouds wasn't ideal either.

We refuelled at Calais after some difficulty explaining to the Frenchman that it was too much of an effort to get me out into a wheelchair just to refuel. I think he understood as on the way back he didn't even ask. After setting off and expecting the cloud-base to heighten we remained optimistic when the 1300 ft cloud-base lifted a little but soon went back to about 1300ft. The journey to Epinal got worse and although marginal mostly, we managed to keep at 1000 ft AGL for much of the journey apart from a couple of 600 ft AGL stints and a short while in IMC conditions flying on instruments. Skud running, maximising height and compromising forward visibility sometimes as well as avoiding the rain and wind turbines was rather draining on both of us. I'm now looking for some type of Wing Leveller for my PA28 181 Archer II and restarting my IMC qualification! Without



SkyDemon and various back-ups we would certainly have turned back. Epinal is in the Vosges Mountains and the aerodrome is 1100 ft above sea level but our route minimised going over too much high ground.

We arrived at Epinal Mirecourt a couple of hours late and were taxied to the Hotel La Fayette where the first beers were wonderful and we met up with many of the participating Rotarians. The following day we were coached to Le Imagerie D'Epinal, a printing museum followed by a tour of the Image Museum.



Epinal is a pleasant town nestled in the Moselle valley with a number of old buildings and a canal. A sizeable chunk of the town was destroyed during the war as the Allies on one bank bombarded the Germans on the other, and vice versa. A pleasant lunch was had next to the waterways in the Captinerie restaurant. Ever keen, most of us walked into town for an English Speaking tour of the old town but numbers started to dwindle off as culture overload took effect. At one stage I was the only one with one of the Epinal museum guides



so had to pretend I was interested in the pictures in the gallery! Our guide's general enthusiasm for the place was endearing. After being coached back to the Hotel (and I had a special lift to take me and my wheelchair on board) we had a very enjoyable informal Gala Dinner. About 50% of the participants were British and therefore after speaking in French we were usually treated to English versions. Dominique Brice did a sterling job as organiser.

Saturday saw us on a pleasant boat trip on the little lake at Bernardmer surrounded by hills and sunshine. We then had lunch at Hohneck in one of the Vosges Ski areas and intrepid Rotarians afterwards trooped the few hundred feet climb to the top of the 'mountain.' Lunch in the Auberge Restaurant reminded me of those ski restaurants frequented as an able bodied skier many moons ago. It was lovely being on the top of the mountains again.





On the way back, stops were made at a confectionary manufacturer and then one of their suppliers before returning to the Hotel. Another very Amicable Dinner followed.

On Sunday morning we said our goodbyes and departed, some by plane from Epinal Mirecourt or Epinal Dogneville, others by car to various destinations.

Weather on the return was a whole lot nicer with CAVOK in France to Calais. I was able to cross the channel to Blythe at 6000+ft enabling glide to land in the event of an engine failure. The Flight back north was generally OK but the cloud base (that pesky cloud base again) lowered the further north we went.

All in all, a lovely weekend of Fellowship with some ever friendly Rotarians.



# Section Francaise

Amicale Des Pilotes Rotariens



Hello Friends !

## BONNE ANNEE !!

May this year see us all together carried by blue sky storms to new horizons...

I am sending you the spring travel program (May 1-5, 2019) that we are preparing. Please tell us to Jean-Luc BRICE and myself your intentions "I come, I don't come, all or part of it,...", this will facilitate the organization.

On the other hand our friend Jean-Philippe MEYER (RC Orléans Val de Loire) organizes a large gathering of aircraft on the Orléans- St-Denis- platform of the LFOZ hotel on the weekend of 29-30 June 2019. Many activities will be organized on site, as well as visits to castles. You will receive the information and a website will be created. This would be a great opportunity to meet many of us around Jean-Philippe.

Very friendly,

Dominique BRICE

President IFFR France



## Fly-South 1-5 MAI 2019

### *Preliminary blueprint of our Project*

#### **WEDNESDAY, MAY 1st**

Meeting altogether at Albi-le-Séquestre Airport  
LFCI at noon.

Lunch on or nearby the Airport.

The afternoon is to be devoted to various visits  
at Cathédrale Sainte-Cécile, Palais de la  
Berbie, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, Pont-Vieux,  
Cité épiscopale, vieux centre, Lapérouse ...

Episcopal City of Albi is registered Patrimoine  
Culturel de l'Humanité by Unesco since July  
2010. Sainte Cécile Cathedral is the largest  
cathedral of the world built in reddish bricks.  
High, majestic and outstanding at the top of  
the hill, it is recognisable from everywhere.

Our hôtel for tonight :

MERCURE on the right bank of Tarn river.

#### **THURSDAY, MAY 2nd**

In the morning : FLIGHT towards Saint-  
Girons-Antichan LFCG ; during the flight you'll  
be able to fly over several Châteaux Cathares  
(a route will be suggested).





In the afternoon : cité gallo-romaine et épiscopale de Saint-Lizier, Saint-Girons, ...

Our hôtel : Hôtel-Restaurant EYCHENNE à Saint-Girons



### **SATURDAY, MAY 4th**

In the morning : FLIGHT bound to Sarlat-Domme LFDS

Visits Forecast : in order to remain in the ecclesiastic domain, église Sainte-Marie sketched by the architect Jean Nouvel, Sarlat-la-Canéda et sa gastronomie, ... foie-gras that cannot be avoided...

Hôtel (booked by JPM) : BW Le Renoir

### **FRIDAY, MAY 3rd**

In the morning : FLIGHT to Castelsarrasin - Moissac LFCX

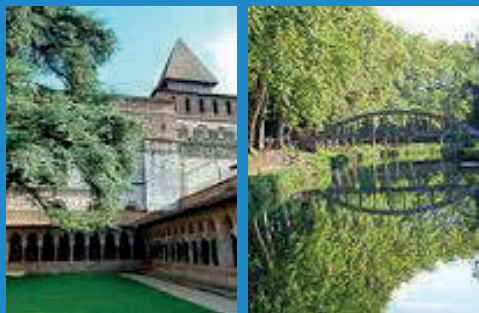
In the afternoon : if we are lucky, we'll see the Bréguet XIV (an aircraft that has been rebuilt and that flies) on the field ; Saint-Pierre abbacy and its closter, roman, le Pont-Canal, un tour en bateau, la ville et l'art-déco, ...

Hôtel : Le-Pont-Napoléon (and if necessary another one which is close to Le-Pont-Napoléon, since there is only 10 rooms available there).



### **DIMANCHE 5 MAI Adieu !....**

At the present time, the hotels are selected and would provide a special rate for our group, but the deadline is April 1st. Individual booking is to be performed by you as usual.





# 25th Anniversary IFFR Benelux

May 24th - 26th 2019

**This event of IFFR Benelux takes place in Brasschaat, Kalmthout and Antwerp, Belgium**

## PROGRAM

### Friday May 24th

- 11.00 - 13.00 (local time):  
Arrival at the airfield of Brasschaat - EBBT.
- 12.30 - 14.00:  
Lunch at the airport in the clubhouse of the Royal Aeroclub of Brasschaat.
- 14.00: Departure to the Gunfire Museum on EBBT. Visit with a guided tour.
- 16.00: Departure by bus to hotel Dennenhof, Brasschaat.
- 16.30: Arrival at the hotel for check-in.
- 19.00: Departure by bus to restaurant Stribboshof (Kalmthout) for an informal three course dinner.
- 22.30: Back to the hotel.

- 15.00: Boat trip through the harbour of Antwerp.
- 16.30: Departure by bus back to the hotel.
- 18.30: Reception in the Sequoia Room of the hotel with bubbles & amuse.
- 19.30: Gala dinner in the Sequoia Room.  
Dress code: black tie.

### Sunday May 26th

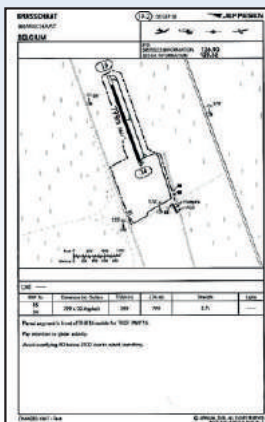
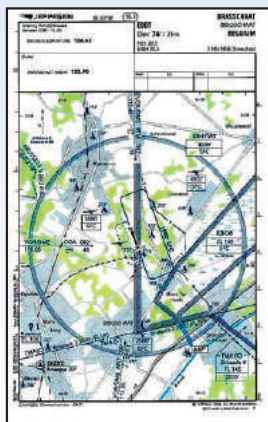
- 09.00: Breakfast and pickup of the lunchboxes.
- 10.00: Transfer by bus to the airfield of Brasschaat.

### Farewell!

(Times are estimates, they may change. Correct times will be communicated during the weekend.)

### Saturday May 25th

- 08.00 - 09.00:  
Breakfast.
- 09.00: Departure by bus to Antwerp.
- 10.00: Guided visit of the Antwerp Cathedral.
- 11.30: Departure by bus to the MAS museum with a guided tour and lunch in the museum restaurant.
- 14.30: Short walk to the London bridge.





# IFFR Banquet & Air Bus Tour

Monday June 3rd & Tuesday 4th

## IFFR BANQUET

The IFFR Banquet is at the Hamburg harbour hotel - Hotel Hafen Hamburg, Seewartenstrasse 9, 20459, a short ride from the IFFR Hotel.

The Banquet will be at 7:30PM with arrival 6:30 PM for 7:00 PM. Do arrange your own transport to be in time at the venue.

The banquet will be a buffet style dinner including drinks.

Price will be Euro 90, - per. person.

- 1) Registration with Svend Andersen at E-mail SKA@hiflux.dk
- 2) Payment to Ulrich Starke, see below for details. Your seats are secured when payment has been received.

Please register and pay before April 30th to secure your seat. In case of dietary requirements do let us know so we can advise the kitchen.





## Airbus Factory Tour

Tuesday June 4th Guided tour at the Hamburg Airbus Factory.

We have obtained a limited number of places for a guided tour at the Airbus factory Finkenwerder in the outskirts of Hamburg.

Price will be Euro 35, - per person.

- 1) Registration with Svend Andersen at  
E-mail SKA@hiflux.dk
- 2) Payment to Ulrich Starke before April 30th,  
see below for details. Your places are  
secured when payment has been received.

2:00pm Departure from the convention center  
with a short stop at Scandic Hamburg  
Emporio Hotel by bus.

3:15pm Guided tour at Airbus GmbH in groups  
of 25.

6:15pm Transfer back to the Scandic Hamburg  
Emporio Hotel.







# IFFR Scandinavian Section

Congress Avenue Hotel Vilnius

## Welcome to Vilnius and the Scandinavian Sections Annual Fly-In

**8th – 11th of August 2019**

Lithuania is the most southern and the largest of Baltic States with nearly eight hundred years of statehood tradition.

Lithuania's Capital – Vilnius has always attracted visitors and fascinated everyone with its architectural diversity.

Vilnius has many names, many faces and many mysteries. Seeming to be in the remote corner of Europe, it is, in fact, located less than 20 kilometers from the geographical centre of

Europe. And, indeed, Vilnius is like a miniature Europe in one town and you can find here everything – from Italianate Baroque to Russian Orthodox churches, from German Gothic to Austrian Rococo architecture and traces of the Jewish past. It is a city, where one street can tell you a thousand stories. Come to Vilnius to find the Europe, come to Vilnius to find your inspiration.

**Come to Vilnius to fall in love.**

Visit our website [www.iffro.org.uk](http://www.iffro.org.uk) for application form

# IFFR Section Switzerland

Thursday 9th - Sunday 12th August

About a year ago, I was able to take over the fortunes of the IFFR Section Switzerland, a pretty big section compared to the size of our country. My aim was to get to know the different segments, which were excellently managed by my predecessor Thomas Morf. Of course, I'm happy that our section has grown again: we now count 75 members.

In a year without a Swiss Meeting, it was not easy to meet many members in person. Some, however, attended the meetings in Groningen NL or Linköping Sweden -here the Swiss delegation was even eleven people strong! (see picture)

A couple of month ago we started with the organisation of the Swiss IFFR meeting 2019. We explored numerous options, in particular regarding the airport, and for this purpose made initial contacts with various authorities. Although the Swiss mills grind rather slowly, the meeting will take place. We look forward to welcoming many international and Swiss guests on the weekend of 30.08. - 01.09.19 to our meeting.

I wish you all a good holiday season, a happy New Year and I look forward seeing you again in 2019.

Only happy landings and many good flying memories.

Nik Ammann



# Welcome to Zurich

**30th of August – 1st of September**

The organising committee of the IFFR Meeting Switzerland is very delighted to have you as our guests!

Zurich as the cosmopolitan city by the water combines creative urban life with nature in all its glory. Zurich is abuzz with activity day and night with its countless events, diverse museums, own food festival and Switzerland's most vibrant nightlife.

The participants beckon a unique, aviative experience that hardly a Swiss could experience so far. The landing will be in Dubendorf (LSMD). The airfield Dubendorf has a more than 100-year history of military and civilian air traffic. From 1948, after the relocation of civil air traffic to the newly created Zurich-Kloten Airport, the airfield Dubendorf was only used militarily. To date, a landing has been reserved for only a few civilian aircrafts. It was our wish to make this unique experience possible for our IFFR guests. It needed the approval of the highest army leaders.





# World War Two Map & Database

## WW2

Our club has a longstanding and close connection with Imperial War Museum Duxford. The Director, 20 years ago, Ted Inman, was a Club member as was Victor Bugg, a key player in the construction of the American Airforce Museum Building. This spectacular building incorporated a Sponsors and Rotary Room for visiting veterans and their families of the USAAF to relax and reflect in, including access to our database.

In 2001 our Club organised and hosted its Official Opening by General Bill Hess, Commander of all US forces in Europe and Africa. [Whose father had flown out of Attlebridge, Norfolk, during WW2] The event took place in our enormous marquee on a 'Flying Day' and it attracted about 1,000 Rotarians from all over the UK, some two thirds of RIBI Districts were represented. Many flew in from both Britain and abroad including Sam Bishop of California, the President of the International Fellowship of Flying Rotarians at that time.

The level of interest and response was truly amazing.

I took away with me two things. General Hess told me of the number of letters he received in his role from veterans and their families wishing to find out more about where they spent such a dramatic period of their lives. In addition, the concentration of USAAF airfields in D1080, as seen on the map, gave me an idea.

This was to contact all clubs with a USAAF airfield nearby, asking for a member volunteer, willing to receive and guide any visiting veteran or his family to the site of the airfield. The response was wonderful.

Our original database listed each airfield, some 135 of them, and a name and phone number of a willing host. Note that this predated widespread email use.

The Official Opening was self funding and in fact made a useful profit which was the ring fenced for construction of the database on the website - a brave step into the unknown at the time and ahead of the game. After those modest costs, the surplus was diverted to our Good Causes Fund.

Four years later the Club organised another major event at Duxford to commemorate 60 years since VE Day.

We invited WW2 veterans, of any uniformed branch, with a sponsor, to either of the two flying days. The guests were welcomed and entertained with food and music [John Mott and his nostalgic musicians] and a flying display. 240 veterans and their sponsoring Rotarians across the two days had a great time - try to read a copy of the booklet made by the Club for the benefit of the veterans, recording what happened, who was there and what their background of service was and what they thought of it all.





This success prompted me to review the database and to discover that too many volunteers in the database clubs were no longer with us.

At the same time, prompted by some of our RAF veterans and Duxford's ambition to match the American Airforce Museum success with something of their own for the RAF, I realised there was just as much interest and enthusiasm for our own veterans.

So I started to produce a database of RAF airfields, initially in D1080, tackling the problem of exactly where the many airfields actually are so they can still be found, even if restored to agricultural use or covered by industrial, business or housing estates.

Most RAF Stations were named after the nearest railway station [at the time] or located as x miles NE or whatever from the nearest town. Ordnance Survey references were no less vague.

Pinpointing the precise location, longitude and latitude, was based on visual clues on Google Earth of ghost runways and hard standings and gives precision. The original concrete was broken up and used in motorway construction. Many other sources are often misleading or plain wrong.

This work on East Anglian airfields showed the need to define which of the 2000 or so airfields countrywide were 'operational' with fighter or bomber squadrons and to not include sites devoted to training or repair or storage or maintenance or transport of men and materiel or just overflow sites etc.

When this was expanded to cover Great Britain and Northern Ireland this produced a database covering nearly 500 entries.

To enable relatives/descendants to trace their active service connections the different airfields each squadron called 'home' at any point during WW2 were identified.

There were many transfers as the nature and focus of the war in the air changed and developed and squadrons were formed, disbanded and reformed.

Some airfields only hosted a single squadron and others, especially in the South East, several tens of squadrons.

To give some idea of the scale, there were 550 squadrons, each with a detailed, day by day history to track.

Looking at the Map the concentration of airfields in the South and East of England is brought home.

The WW2 Map and Database in its final form has been on our website for a year now, no effort has been made to publicise it beyond word of mouth, as we know from experience that any flaw is immediately pounced upon by enthusiasts. There have been no adverse comments from the 1000 plus visits to the database to date and so we feel confident to release the website link to the many interested organisations to open it up to researchers. The list covers both the US and UK. It includes national and local museums, regional and county tourist boards, national and local historical societies and clubs, national and local archives, veteran associations, specialist magazines and newsletters, genealogy websites, IFFR, service magazines etc A very extensive list.

Without doubt, our WW2 Map and Database is a distinctive and unique feature of our site and provides a service to the interested public and reminds visitors of the Club's links with Duxford, USAAF and RAF as well as driving up the number of visitors, now and significantly more once we release our link to the many related organisations.

### Is this wishful thinking?

One should not underestimate the scale of the interest in WW2.

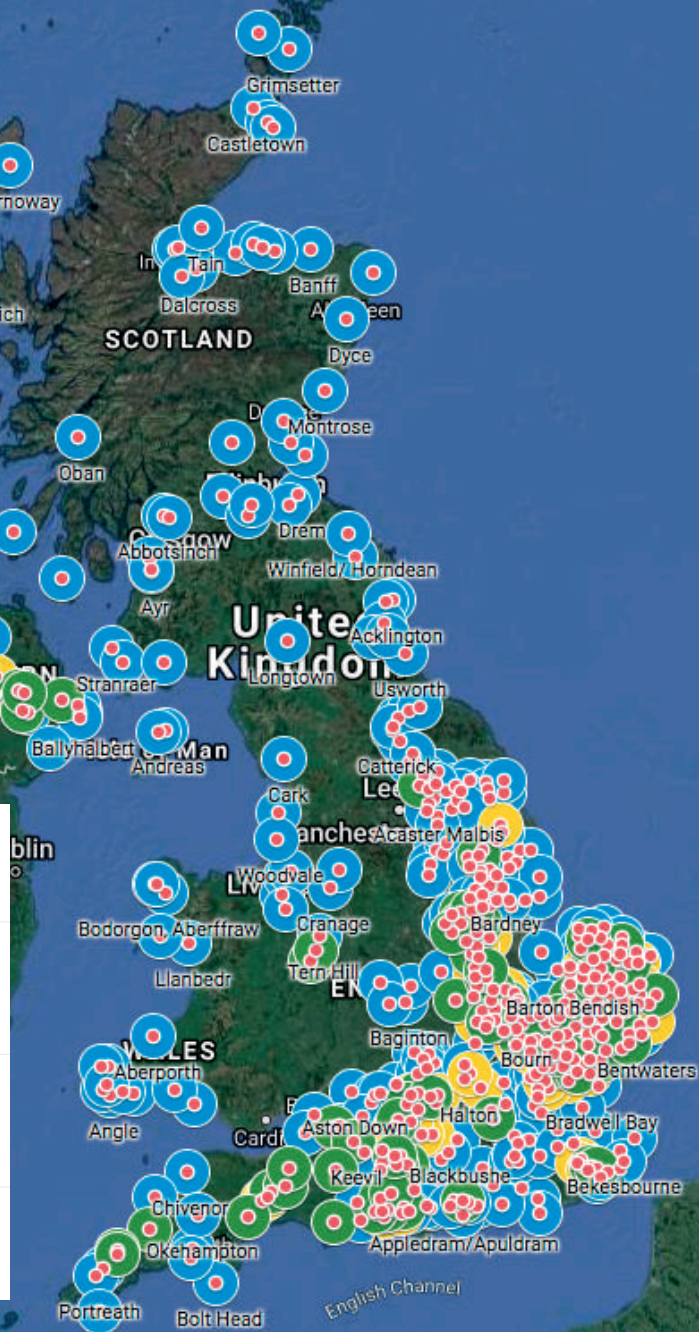
Think of the continuing support of Duxford, day to day and especially on flying days. Amazon stocks over 30,000 WW2 books and 2,000 films, the enduring support of WW2 based TV series,

YouTube has an enormous number of videos of WW2 aircraft, all with 10s of thousands of views.

The RAF had 1.2 million personnel during WW2, 186,000 of them aircrew. Few of those are still alive but that represents many families and descendants. The extraordinary interest in genealogy, especially in the period when official records are unavailable or unreliable, ie WW2. The interest in TV programmes like 'Who do you think you are?' and 'Heir Hunters', the availability of records on line or microfiche has made constructing a family tree much easier, no graveyards or handwritten parish records to interpret. A measure of the interest is a website listing 50 genealogical websites and the 12 best. Ancestry.com comes first.

# WW2 UK Operational Airfields

- ☒ Airfields used by RAF only
  - ▼ ● All items
- ☒ Airfields used by USAAF only
  - ▼ ● All items
- ☒ Used by both RAF and USAAF
  - ▼ ● All items
- ☒ Alphabetical list of all airfields
  - ▼ ● All items





# A Colditz Story

by Angus Clark



When two Continental IFFR meetings are held on successive weekends Alisma and I always try and link them with some touring in the Robin. So it was last year with the Scandinavian and German events falling in the middle of August. Feroz Wadia joined us in his Sports Cruiser. After the Swedish meeting in Linköping we flew south into Poland where we stayed 3 nights. We then flew on to Altenburg in eastern Germany. We came here as we wanted to visit Colditz, the WWII Prisoner of War camp, 25 miles away.

We all have an image of Colditz Castle be it from the 1955 film or the later BBC series. A dark, forbidding building comes to mind. Sitting on a hillside it dwarfs the small town below. We parked our hire car just below the Castle gates and went to the welcome area. The first guided tour was already full but that was a bonus. With 3 others we joined a group led by a most knowledgeable and articulate German guide. It turned out that he had been educated in England until he was 18.

Unlike the tunnels in the “Great Escape” camp of Sagan the Colditz tunnels had many levels as they weaved their way up and down around the building. Hopefully these ended up outside the Castle walls but some didn’t, surfacing within the compound. Our tour started in a basement area. Here one of the original tunnels is perfectly preserved. Our guide explained that wood was inserted in the rocky sub-structure and then wetted. The wood expanded and cracked the rocks. Digging a



Entrance to one of the escape tunnels



Alisma and Angus just escaped!

tunnel was a noisy laborious task. To recover the diggers from the tunnel for roll call would waste time. Dummies were made so that the count appeared complete as the diggers continued their work. On another occasion an escape that hadn't happened was reported to the Germans so that the number for roll call would be reduced.

The chapel organ played unlikely part in the escapes. One of its pipes was used to store the escape material of German currency, maps, false papers, railway timetables and the like. It was also used to play loud music throughout the day to cover the noise of tunnelling. The organist had to make sure that he played a piece that didn't require the pipe used for storage!!

The first of 11 Britons to make a 'home run' was the politician Airey Neave. He and fellow Dutch escapee, Tony Luteyn, disguised themselves as German officers. They walked out of the camp during a theatrical

performance having got into the unguarded German quarters through a trap door built under the stage. When clear of the camp they changed their clothes so as to match their cover story of being relocating Dutch workers. Travelling almost entirely by train Neave and Luteyn reached the Swiss border, almost 400 miles away, in an amazing 3 days. They had many narrow squeaks on the way – on one occasion sharing a railway compartment with a SS officer at his request.

Many other ingenious schemes were hatched but many failed. The civilian camp electrician was impersonated by a Dutch prisoner. Unfortunately he bumped into a friend of the real electrician. An English officer, convincingly disguised as a woman, dropped his/her watch. A gallant English prisoner, in a passing work party, picked it up and handed it to a guard who on returning it to the lady realised all was not what it seemed!

The highlight of our tour was a visit to the loft where the 'Colditz glider' was built. The Germans, unwittingly, played a part in this. Thinking of the prisoners' welfare they created a library. Among the books was a two volume work - 'Aircraft Design'. 16 British prisoners built the two-man glider behind a false wall in the attic. The wing spars were made from floorboards, the control wires from electric cable and the glider skin was from cotton sheets starched with porridge.



Rebuilt Glider in attic with Feroz

Building the glider was one thing but launching it was another. The prisoners intended to construct a runway on top of the Castle's pitched roof. Under cover of darkness they planned to knock a hole through the roof from their workshop. The glider would then be hauled out and its wings attached. The catapult to launch it was to be powered by a bathtub weighted down with concrete. The glider, however, never flew as the Castle was liberated by the Americans before the prisoners had a chance to try. The only photograph of the original was taken by an American journalist attached to the liberating army. It is believed it was then chopped up for firewood.

A television documentary in 2012 showed the building of a replica of the glider. This was launched successfully off the Castle roof. For safety reasons the glider was radio controlled and only carried weighted dummies. In the loft we saw a video of the assembly of this reincarnation and the launch. A second replica was built and is now housed in the attic.

This was a great way to end a remarkable tour of a piece of history that we had seen previously only as a film or as a television series. It exceeded our expectations.



Alisma and Angus with cut out of Airey Neave in the courtyard

PHOTOGRAPHS BY FEROZ WADIA

## Organised UK Fly In Events so far

### Wednesday 17 April

Sandtoft (EGCF) Host Tony Flinn

### Thursday 23 May

Le Touquet (LFAT) Host Diana & John Davy

### Wednesday 10 July

Cark Host James | Alexander

### Saturday 27 July

Old Sarum (EGLS) Host Graham Browning.  
(weather reserve date 28 July)



## IFFR A.G.M.

To all IFFR members, please be advised that our Annual General Meeting is being held on Monday 3rd June from 15.00-16.00 in the Shanghai room in the Hamburg Convention Centre.

Initially we were told that only those with convention passes would be able to attend but we have now received a message that there will be a route to the room that will not require a pass. This is after many emails have been exchanged with RI to elicit this response.

If you plan to attend this meeting and you are not registered for the convention then please let me know so I can pass instructions to you. Also confirm if you will be accompanied by your partner.

Kind regards

Ian Kerr  
World Secretary



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