



International
Fellowship of
Flying Rotarians

September 2023

Issue 119

The newsletter of the UK Section of IFFR

The Rotating Beacon



Avro Lancaster NX 611 'Just Jane'

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!

In this Issue

- Hello from your new Editor
- A word from our Chairman
- East Kirkby
- Luebeck, Germany
- Helsinki, Finland
- Flight to end polio

Contents

Hello from your new Editor, Tony Flinn 3

A word from our Chairman Feroz Wadia..... 4

East Kirkby visit by Peter Jude..... 5

Sandown BBQ by Tony Flinn..... 7

Breda meeting, The Netherlands, by George Ritchie 8

Luebeck, Germany meeting July 2023, by Tony Flinn 10

Helsinki, Finland meeting, by George Ritchie..... 11

Around the world Flight to end polio, by George Ritchie.... 14

UK’s premier event in September in Rochester 15

Join IFFR 16



Hello from your new Editor, Tony Flinn

It is my pleasure to take over the reins after a sterling job done by previous Editor Duncan Moffatt. As this is being written, 'summer' is in full swing although several day visits have been cancelled due to the vagaries of our UK weather.

In this issue of the Rotating Beacon we start with some meeting reports, some of which by World President George Ritchie have been directly purloined from his blog. I make no apologies for that practice but at the same time request more from our membership for future issues.

The season kicked off with a visit to East Kirkby and BBQ at Sandown and following are reports from the Benelux, Germany and Scandinavian meetings.



Tony and his PA28 Archer II G-BOMP



A word from our Chairman

We are two-thirds of the way through the year and the weather really has not been kind to us.

The first organised fly-in was the BBQ hosted by Mike Cromati at his hangar in Sandown on the Isle of Wight. Only two aircraft flew in, others arrived by road and stayed on for a few days. All the Isle of Wight members and their partners did attend.

The second event was organised by Peter Jude at East Kirkby where a thousand foot cloud base prevented anyone flying in. However we had an excellent guided tour and watched the Lancaster and Mosquito taxiing before visiting the hangars and control tower. It all made for a great day and we also enrolled a new member.

An added bonus was our two night stay at the Petwood Hotel at Woodhall Spa. This was the Officers Mess for the Dambusters and other Squadrons. The hotel itself is well worth a visit if you are ever in the area.

The July visit to Wellesbourne Mountford to see the Avro Vulcan engine run had to be called due to the terrible weather forecast for the day. A pity as some who had enjoyed our last visit there were keen to visit again.

In a few days time we are due to attend the Little Gansden Air and Car Show and hope the weather will be kinder to us.



Some of us will be in the area anyway and plan to drive there and meet next to the IFFR banner. That event will probably be over by the time this issue gets to you but perhaps not.

The event not to be missed is our main meeting in September in Rochester. You will already have received details on how to register for this. Kevin Doyle has put a lot of effort into organising this so please do support him and come and join us there.

The Christmas Lunch at the R.A.F. Club in London is always a great way to end the IFFR year. A number of European members look forward to visiting London and joining us for a private dinner in the library the night before the lunch. Why not do the same.

We look forward to meeting some of you there.

Yours in Rotary

Feroz Wadia

chairman@iffr.uk



East Kirkby visit by Peter Jude

IFFR UK visit to East Kirkby Aviation Museum 6 June 2023

We were expecting 4 planes to fly in and also 4 cars were signed up. On this day our lovely British weather prevented those intending to fly in with a cloud 1000'-1500' base and drizzle which did not improve until 1100. The Typhoons at RAF Coningsby nearby began to thunder across at approx. 1100.



However we were pleased to see our members who arrived by car giving a total of 9 members present. On arrival we went to the restaurant for coffee/tea and immediately our President Feroz noticed a visitor who was wearing a Rotary Cap sitting at a table with his wife. On further investigation we discovered he was an avid aviation enthusiast. Robert Irwin had been a member of the Rotary Club of Clitheroe for many years but was NOT aware of Fellowships. By the time tea/coffee had been downed Feroz had provided information, taken his details and he has now become a member. He and his wife joined us for part of the day.

At 1100 Avro Lancaster NX 611 fired up her 4 engines ready for the 20 minute taxi run. What a beautiful looking aeroplane and the noise from the four Merlins is so distinctive. She completes taxi runs during the season to

generate income by allowing people to be on board paying a fee for the experience. The intention is to restore her to flying condition by 2028 and the team doing the work say they are on course to achieve this objective. The majority of restoration work is carried out during the winter months.

Following the Lancaster taxi run we were entertained by Mosquito HJ711 doing its taxi run for 20 minutes with a paying visitor in the P2 seat. Once again this was a wonderful sight. This mosquito was restored by its dedicated private owner over a period of 40 years and is the only existing version of this variant in the world. Parts were obtained from all over the world with her being completed and based at East Kirkby in 2017.



At 1200 we were met by our guide Peter, a very knowledgeable man on the Lancaster. He promised to provide information that none of us would be aware of concerning the plane & its missions. This turned out to be true with much of his knowledge having been learned from his father who had been a crew member on Lancasters during the war. An entertaining 40 minutes.

Now it was time for lunch in the restaurant with the afternoon free for members to look around the museum and also take in the 2nd taxi runs



by NX611 & HJ711. Touring the museum we saw the control tower which is set up as if in action during the 2nd world war. There are workshops containing parts of different aeroplanes to be restored, the church is dedicated to those lost in battle, all around the airfield there are memorials to those who had been based at RAF E Kirkby. In the main hangar on display are memorabilia and parts of planes old engines avionics etc. Also in there is a B25 under restoration.

In 1983 NX611 was bought by Fred and Harold Panton to be a memorial to their brother Christopher who was shot down on operations



in WW2. Since then the development of the airfield has gone beyond what was anticipated and is now a wonderful aviation museum with the expected airworthiness of NX611 to be completed by 2028. We had a great time visiting with excellent fellowship.

Our President had driven down from Scotland with Raye and stayed at the Petwood Hotel nearby at Woodhall Spa. During the 2nd world war the hotel served as a hospital for injured soldiers and became the home of the legendary "617" Dambusters Squadron. Jashu & I joined Feroz and Raye for dinner to complete a very nice IFFR day.



Sandown BBQ by Tony Flinn

An excellent BBQ was hosted by Mike Cromati and the Isle of Wight crew on 27th May, a date rearranged from an earlier one due to the weather.

Sandown is always a popular destination and this weekend hosted a couple of hundred aircraft in a LAA meeting. Yours truly was one of two to fly in (185 miles each way) so I deservedly won the longest trip prize (if there was one).

A couple of dozen members and guests were treated to an excellent lunch in Mike's hangar.



Breda meeting, The Netherlands by George Ritchie



IFFR Benelux hosted the first of the European Section Fly Ins for 2023 in Breda, Netherlands on the weekend of 23 – 25 June. With fine sunshine across the whole of Europe, 8 aircraft flew in to Breda/Seppe International airport from the UK, Norway, and other parts of the Benelux for a truly delightful weekend of Flying Rotarian fellowship.

We all arrived in time for a welcome lunch in the flying club at this delightful GA airport. After lunch, we had an interesting tour of the Aviation Museum on the airfield before being bussed into Breda to the Golden Tulip Keyser Hotel – allegedly named after IFFR Benelux Section Leader Kris de Keyser.

Benelux Section Member Maurice Tax, who had spent four years in Breda at the outset of his military service, and knew the town well, then acted as our guide for a walking tour of the old town, leading down to the Mark Canal with its many waterfront bars and restaurants. Around 40 of us sat down for dinner that night in Humpreys Restaurant, just a short walk from the hotel, after which many of the group savoured the warm evening with a few more drinks at one of the outdoor cafes/bars.

Saturday morning was again hot and sunny – indeed I don't think I have ever seen so many of our male members sporting shorts and sandals!



Breda is the home of the Dutch Military Academy, and we spent the morning having an excellent behind the scenes tour. Our official guide gave us the regular presentation – and Maurice brought it to life and left us in fits of laughter with his “unofficial accounts” of his time as a cadet there.

Then it was time for lunch at the aptly named Big Belly Restaurant. A light lunch, enough to prepare us for the afternoon’s fun quiz and Belgian Beer Tasting session. By the end of the day, everyone was a winner.

The Saturday Night Benelux Section Gala Dinner is always one of the high spots of the year – and one of the few occasions at which my tuxedo makes an appearance. Our Saturday night Gala was a gastronomic treat, the speeches were mercifully short, and we made the most of the musical entertainment afterwards.

Sunday morning came all too soon, but with perfect weather once again, except for one pilot who shall remain nameless had a fast and easy return home. The last pilot, having accidentally filled his turbocharged aircraft with Mogas rather than Avgas had to spend an extra night in Breda until the tanks could be emptied and refuelled correctly. I’m sure an extra night in Breda was not a hardship!

Thanks, Kris, Maurice, Ingrid and team Benelux!



Luebeck, Germany meeting July 2023

by Tony Flinn

The German & Austrian section hosted a weekend Fly-in to the Northern City of Luebeck. Luebeck was known as “Queen of the Hanseatic League” for 500 years and has been a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1987.



The weekend began with a gathering at Luebeck Blankensee airport (EDHL) on Friday 7th. The airport having had an eventful history including as base for the Berlin Airlift.

Rosi and I were the only UK participants to fly into Luebeck Blankensee airport. The other 4 UK participants (World President George Ritchie and Caroline, UK President Feroz Wadia and Raye) came by commercial jet through nearby Hamburg. For those interested in our fly-in we came from Sandtoft (N Lincs) EGCF, refuelled and lunched at Midden Zeeland (EHMZ) in the south of The Netherlands. Total flying time about 6 hours for the 600 miles. Because of this we arrived a day earlier.

Later that day we had a fascinating guided tour of the old town (Altstadt). The English-speaking group were guided by Dutchman Jan, a Luebeck resident, and engineer with a comprehensive knowledge of architecture, engineering and history- valuable knowledge for such a diverse city brimming with medieval and renaissance architecture.



Dinner was in the Schabbelhaus zu Luebeck.

Saturday saw us on a boat trip to the Baltic resort of Travemuende where we experienced the delights of a popular beach resort in glorious sunshine with 30+ deg C. temps.

The day was capped with a Gala Dinner in the Schiffergesellschaft (Ship's Company) restaurant. Luckily for us Brits the language spoken at all gatherings is English. German IFFR President Fritz Breithenthaler and World President George Ritchie spoke briefly at the Dinner. Departure home was on Sunday after another excellent weekend.

Special thanks to the German & Austrian section especially President Fritz Breithenthaler and Ingo Neufert.





Helsinki, Finland meeting by George Ritchie

The global family of Flying Rotarians came together again in early August – this time in Helsinki, Finland, when members from Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Latvia, UK, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland and USA were hosted by IFFR Scandinavia. The misbehaving jetstream, far further south than normal, which has led to the fires the Mediterranean has also given us weeks of unstable weather in Northern Europe. Although the De Bruyns flew in from Belgium, the Davys from the UK, Tollef, Rolf and Peter and Ellen Wenk made it from Norway, and Janis and his wife came from Riga, the rest of the participants refrained from flying themselves, opting instead for a comfortable commercial flight.

Our meeting started on Thursday morning at Numella Airport – the new Helsinki GA airport with greetings from the Mayor of Numella, the Airport Director and the President of the Vihti Nummela Rotaryklubi. A great Rotary welcome starting an awesome weekend of Flying Rotarian Fellowship. After lunch, we

headed back into the city with some time to relax before we all met for dinner in the nearby Restaurant Teatteri.



Friday started with a guided tour of the amazing Oodi Library – not just a library, but a community focused learning centre. Then, in line with Rotary's focus area of peace, a fascinating symposium "Finland, Sweden and NATO: the future of Nordic Co-operation" moderated by Ambassador Stefan Lindström with guest speaker Parliamentarian Dr Risto EJ Penttilä. Some very interesting perspectives on some big questions: How will Finland deal

with their new membership of NATO? What are the implications for the whole Nordic region if Sweden also joins NATO? What does the future of all of Western Europe look like from a Nordic perspective? And how will the war between Russia and Ukraine develop?

After lunch at the nearby music conservatory, there was time for an afternoon exploring the city and shopping.



In the early evening our hosts held their Section AGM – at which the members voted to rename as IFFR Nordic Section and Section Leader Svend presented Bo Johnson with a PHF in recognition of his decades of service (still continuing) to IFFR.

Finally, a superb Gala Dinner at the Guildhall. World President George awarded a Presidential Citation to Bo as he steps down, after well over 10 years, as IFFR webmaster. And the Nordic Aviation Trophy was awarded for 2023 to our host for the weekend Eric Rosenlew. Another great day of IFFR Fellowship.



For the more adventurous, Saturday started with a pre-breakfast sauna and outdoor swimming. Splitting into three groups, the morning was spent on a guided walking through the residential area close to the hotel brimming with architectural gems in Art Nouveau surrounded by quiet parks and views of the Baltic Sea. Then it was on to the former home of Marshall Mannerheim, often regarded as the founder of modern Finland – still completely furnished with the family's personal belongings. A short walk down the hill took us to our lunch at Café Ursula, overlooking Helsinki Bay.





In the afternoon, we were free to explore Helsinki and its beautiful waterfront on our own, before we assembled early evening for a superb evening dinner cruise around the islands of the Helsinki archipelago, accompanied by a local musical group who started their singing for us in the Helsinki Central Park.



Sunday came all too soon. For us, there was time for one last drink in my favourite haunt at Helsinki Airport before boarding our flight back to London.



But we are already looking forward to meeting once again in Riga, Latvia next summer.

Many thanks, in particular, to Erik and Charlotta Rosenlew for a great weekend.



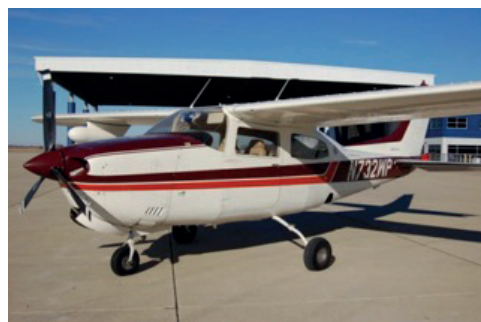
Around the world Flight to end polio

by George Ritchie



IFFR members John Ockenfels and Peter Teahan have completed their Around the World Flight to End Polio mission, landing back where they started in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, USA.

John and Peter have completed around 165 hours flying time in their Cessna 210, N732WP, since leaving Cedar Rapids in May. They have encountered a variety of challenges, mechanical, medical and meteorological on their journey – but, with the assistance of many IFFR members and Rotarians around the world, they have overcome them all to arrive home safely on the date originally planned. As they made their way home across the Pacific, their longest over water flight was from American Samoa to Honolulu - an incredible 2,764 miles flown in 16 hours 49 minutes - even further than the 2,390 mile, 14 hour 10 minute flight from Hawaii to California!



John and Peter have raised well over **\$1 million** for End Polio Now already but are looking to boost that total further. To quote RI President Gordon McInally *“When the day comes that polio is eradicated, there will be a global Rotary party and we will all want to be there. But if you want to attend, you need to buy a ticket”*. So, if you have not already done so, please consider donating to them now.



Finally, my personal thanks on behalf of IFFR to all of you (too many to mention by name) who organized fund-raising events for John and Peter, or who hosted and supported them in other ways in the USA, in Europe and in Australia.

In due course, there will be many opportunities for John and Peter to share their stories further and we will look forward to hearing them. But for now, John and Peter, we in IFFR salute you for your fantastic achievements, both in aviation and for End Polio Now.



Finally, don't forget to register for the UK's premier event in September in Rochester



International
Fellowship of
Flying Rotarians

Welcome to the IFFR UK Section Annual Fly In Weekend
Rochester, Kent - “The Garden of England”
22nd to 24th September 2023

We invite you to join us for our 2023 Weekend Meeting in Kent, the county long known as **“The Garden of England”**. A county well known for growing hops for the finest British ales, and now home to a variety of prize-winning vineyards.

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We look forward to meeting you!

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