

ROUND BRITAIN RALLY

How long have you been putting off that tour around Britain? It's something many pilots plan to do but all too often life gets in the way. Well, why not make 2016 the year you tick that tour around your homeland off your bucket list? As part of the LAA's 70th anniversary celebrations, we have organised a week-long tour that takes in England, Scotland and Wales; sorry Northern and Southern Ireland but for reasons of time and simplicity we decided to forego a crossing of the Irish Sea.

The tour starts on Saturday 27 August from Duxford. There is an LAA Bonus Weekend at Duxford so you have the opportunity to enjoy the museum before heading off for what is planned as a short day. The event finishes on Friday 2 September at the LAA Sywell Rally.

We have made the tour very flexible and suitable for all skill levels and most aircraft, from low and slow vintage, classic and microlight types to airways equipped speedsters. You can, if you wish, fly direct tracks and get permission to cross controlled airspace, or you can meander with minimal requirements to use the radio. You choose.

What we will provide are overnight stopovers where you will meet fellow members for a meal, a drink and good company, having enjoyed a day's flying over our green and pleasant land. We must take this opportunity to thank the overnight airfields for their help and enthusiasm in arranging the tour, they have been very supportive and we are confident they will do all they can to ensure you enjoy your stay.

The schedule below outlines the week-long tour in day-sized chunks, and you can take part on one, two or however many days you wish. Naturally, we hope some of you will complete the full week.

We have arranged every night stop at an airfield where you can camp, where there are hotels close to hand, where food is available (including breakfast) on the airfield or very close by, and where local LAA Struts or aero club members can help with local transport and provide assistance should you need it. We have also done our best to use airfields with a choice of reasonably long runways, plus they all have fuel available.

En route stops are suggested but you are more than welcome to do your own thing, as in England at least, we really are spoilt for choice and there may well be somewhere in particular that you fancy visiting. No problem, wander off the route and return as the fancy takes you.

Importantly we have considered the less experienced or pilots of slower, shorter range aircraft. For the Scottish and Welsh sectors we offer two alternatives, keeping you clear of high ground if you wish, and also as a safeguard should the weather be less than ideal.

70TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR SCHEDULE

Saturday 27 August

A leisurely day at the LAA Bonus Day at Duxford before heading off across the flatlands of East Anglia to Fenland, and then up to the first night stop at Sherburn-in-Elmet. They're always friendly up at Sherburn and there's a good cafe on site. Hardy souls can camp, and there are pubs and B&B accommodation in the town three miles up the road.

Sunday 28 August

Leave Sherburn and head over to the east coast for a lunch stop and BBQ at Eshott and then continue up the coast, taking in the rugged Northumberland scenery. Why not head inland a little to spot Hadrian's Wall? Then, we cross the border into Scotland and on to our second night stop at Perth, where you will receive a traditional warm Scottish welcome from the Strathtay Strut. Perth has a hotel and restaurant on site and the airfield is only five minutes away from the town of Scone.

Monday 29 August

After a hearty Scottish breakfast, you have the choice of routing north towards Inverness and down the Great Glen to the west coast to land at Oban. From Oban it's only a skip and a jump to Glenforsa should the winds favour the single runway, and you can then continue south down to another intermediate stop at Kirkbride or go direct to the next night stop at Manchester Barton. This route takes in some of Britain's most stunning scenery, including Loch Ness and Ben Nevis, but it does require good, settled VFR weather and offers limited emergency landing options in parts.

Alternatively, if the weather is not so great or you prefer not to fly in the vicinity of high ground, you can drop south from Perth and then head across to the west coast into Kirkbride for an intermediate stop, and then continue down to Barton. En route from Kirkbride to Barton is the Lake District, but if the fells are covered in cloud or the wind is up, it's easy enough to route down the low lying west coast, keeping clear of Sellafield nuclear fuel reprocessing plant of course.

Barton airport's management have kindly offered free landings for those taking part in the tour and camping on site is permitted. Alternatively there are plenty of local hotels. The North Western Strut will have members on hand to help with any problems or needs that arise. Again the airport restaurant will offer meals in the evening and breakfast in the morning. Note that Barton is inside the Manchester ATZ and you will need to follow their low-level route in and out. The route is marked on the charts and Barton's website gives a good brief.

Tuesday 30 August

We're off to Somerset today and again there's a choice. Like Scotland, Wales is a bit lumpy and the weather needs to play ball for safe VFR flight. So, given fair weather and a desire to overfly high ground, you leave Barton down the low level route to Crewe and then head around the Welsh coast and down the Menai Strait into Caernarvon (you will need to talk to RAF Valley

in case they have jet traffic in the area).

From Caernarvon you can cross the Welsh hills for an intermediate stop at Shobdon, where the Shobdon Strut is based. This is a very picturesque route but should circumstances or preference dictate, you can route from Barton down to Shobdon and avoid the high ground altogether. From Shobdon you continue to Henstridge for the night stop where the Wessex Strut will look after you. Meals will be available in the evening and breakfast in the morning, camping and local B&Bs being available.

Wednesday 31 August

It's a West Country Tour today, routing via Bodmin for lunch, and maybe dropping into the pretty cliff top airfield at Perranporth. Then on to Land's End and around the coast with perhaps a trip across Dartmoor, military manoeuvres permitting, before stopping at Dunkeswell for the night. The active Devon Strut will be on hand to chat, socialise and offer help if needed.

Thursday 1 September

Heading east along the south coast, you can call in at Compton Abbas, Old Sarum or Popham before heading for Sandown on the Isle of Wight for lunch. Alternatively you can drop into Goodwood where the Southern Strut are looking forward to seeing you (pre-1966 aircraft land for free) before we have our last night stop at Rochester. Camping is available and there is a cafe on site plus a hotel and restaurant by the airfield entrance. The Tiger Moth pub is only a couple of hundred yards up the road. At Rochester you will be looked after by the local Kent Strut.

Friday 2 September

After breakfast you will be leaving the Garden of England for your final destination of the 70th Anniversary Tour – the LAA Sywell Rally where we hope you will stay for an exciting weekend. You will need to arrange your landing slot via the Sywell website.

There you have it then, a tour around Britain during which you will see some of our best coastal, mountainous and rolling countryside. I cannot recall the Association organising anything like this before. Come for a day or a week, we'd love to see you.

We are currently considering a prize or two and commemorative certificates, and inevitably a few loose ends still need to be tidied up but there's plenty there to whet your appetite.

If you are interested in taking part, please send your details to neil.wilson@laa.uk.com. It won't commit you to anything but we can at least get an idea of numbers and we will be able to keep you informed. ■



Scotland's Great Glen with Loch Ness in the foreground. It is over 60 miles long and scythes across the country from Inverness on the eastern end to Fort William in the west.



LAA 70TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR



OF BRITAIN

Start: Duxford Finish: Sywell via some of the UK's finest scenery and airfields