



'Outbound

In 2016 Helicopter Club member Peter Wilson travelled solo by helicopter through 23 countries to complete a journey around Africa of about 16,600nm in 73 days. This journey, details of which were published in the Summer 2017 issue of *Rotor Torque*, is part of an epic project which he calls 'Three Journeys Round'. The purpose of the journeys is to raise the profile of 'a better planet through sustainable development' and to fundraise in aid of Save the Children and Motivation International. Motivation is a leading provider of mobility solutions for disabled people living in the developing world.

On 8th April 2017 Peter, who was joined by Matthew Gallagher, set off on his second journey, travelling east around the world and landing in 42 countries. Peter is a retired engineer and pilot who devotes his time to sustainable development projects. Matthew is a Chartered Accountant and pilot who supports Peter with his vision and project. This is the story of their epic adventure:

"I returned from my solo world record VFR helicopter flight around Africa on 03 October 2017. 'TJR-Africa' was utterly spectacular. I saw first-hand the stunning contrasts across Africa, including the generous peoples; cultures; levels of development; weather; deserts; forests; coastlines; rivers; volcanoes; animals; history; and, much, much more. However, I was knackered! I had less than six months to be ready for my journey around the world, in order to fit the weather window.

Since the brownout experience flying between





around the world'

Peter Wilson describes his equatorial, antipodal circumnavigation with Matthew Gallagher in an R66 – and his ambitious new plans

Tamanrasset and Agadez in the Sahara desert had nearly killed me. I had made two significant changes for TJR-RTW: I recruited a co-pilot and installed a two-axis autopilot with sponsorship support from Genesys Aerosystems.

Seven days a week I was busy planning the logistics, the visits, and farming the pictures and video assets. I was building on a successful formula but planning a completely new, longer route with three service stops, and I needed to take into account all the cold water equipment, and a weight and balance of two crew. Matthew

Tourist fun at the Pyramids of Giza





threw himself at a fitness regime to make his 85kg berth and we both attended open water survival courses. Dave Cross of HQ Aviation co-ordinated the efforts of both Robinson Helicopter Company and Rolls-Royce to solve the vibration problem uncovered during preparation of the aircraft. It required nerves of steel as DIGA sat in bits for two months.

With the journey planned for 120 days, many of the visits were still tentative. However we are as ready as we can be and had a plan to re-plan.

And they're off

April 8, 2017, Booker: We're aware of camera clicking by onlookers, but Matthew and I are concentrating on packing DIGA. Finally there is a flurry of photographs, and hugs and

kisses. Matthew starts DIGA and I check that the Delorme tracking is establishing its two-way communications with General Aviation Support Egypt (GASE). Eddie and Ahmed of GASE will follow our progress all the way, providing permits, logistics, and first response for SAR, and support in the air and on the ground. As with the African journey, the mission simply would not function without the effort and attention of GASE.

I call airfield information for a flight 'outbound around the world, back in August!' Wycombe Tower passes their best wishes and we lift into a hazy sky for Le Touquet and then Avignon. We fly on to Elba, progress across the spine of Italy to Bari, then to Corfu in Greece. By day 4 we are in Iraklion. The

weather has been good, albeit a bit hazy.

We are getting slicker as a team, using Rocket Route for flight plans, working all our navigation software, using the HeliSAS autopilot, and our mounting and dismounting regime. Our bodies are settling into eating twice a day!

Somewhere over the sea en-route to Iraklion I am on the telephone trying to get our elusive permit for India. This has been a long running saga. Another high-level call is made to the Director of the Directorate general of Civil Aviation in India. We can only go through India; there are no 'over, under or round' options. Fingers crossed, we need that permit.

Continental coasting out is a special feeling. Matthew has a horizon-wide grin as he flies us



Clearance is 'maintain VFR' – if you can
Left: Matthew (left) and Peter set out on an epic adventure
Right: tail cover kept out the desert dust



VFR across the Mediterranean Sea at FL085 to Borg El Arab (Alexandria) in Egypt. The Egyptian authorities look after us, and we are soon climbing to FL085 again. You have to file IFR in Egypt. The flight plan had been accepted and the clearance given to “maintain VFR”. The dust haze mixing with the fog of Cairo makes visibility atrocious, and the autopilot is making all the difference. I request a descent to keep the ground in sight. The Controller vectors us to the ILS for runway 23R and we fly an LNAV approach using our multiple GPS guides. The runway pops into view at two miles!

We fuel up, pop both covers on – and the new tail rotor cover, which is an excellent addition to DIGA's protection against dust. Then we

meet up with Eddie (GASE) and Abdullah his driver to absorb the rich history of Cairo in a day!

Flying to Hurghada at FL100 Matthew enjoys his best views of just how stunning the desert can be. Crossing the Red Sea is beautiful; but the Saudi weather is hazy and dusty all the way to the UAE. We are delayed in Hail waiting for the blowing dust to subside at Al Ahsa. Saudi culture is an experience.

Our plan on day 11 is to fly to Al Ain direct across Qatar to the UAE. We have all the permissions and routing advice from Al Ahsa Tower and Dhahran Military. It still takes 15 minutes waiting in the sun to get our clearance squawk to depart. Tower passes us to Dhahran who 20 minutes later question both our route and our clearances. After some discussion and computation

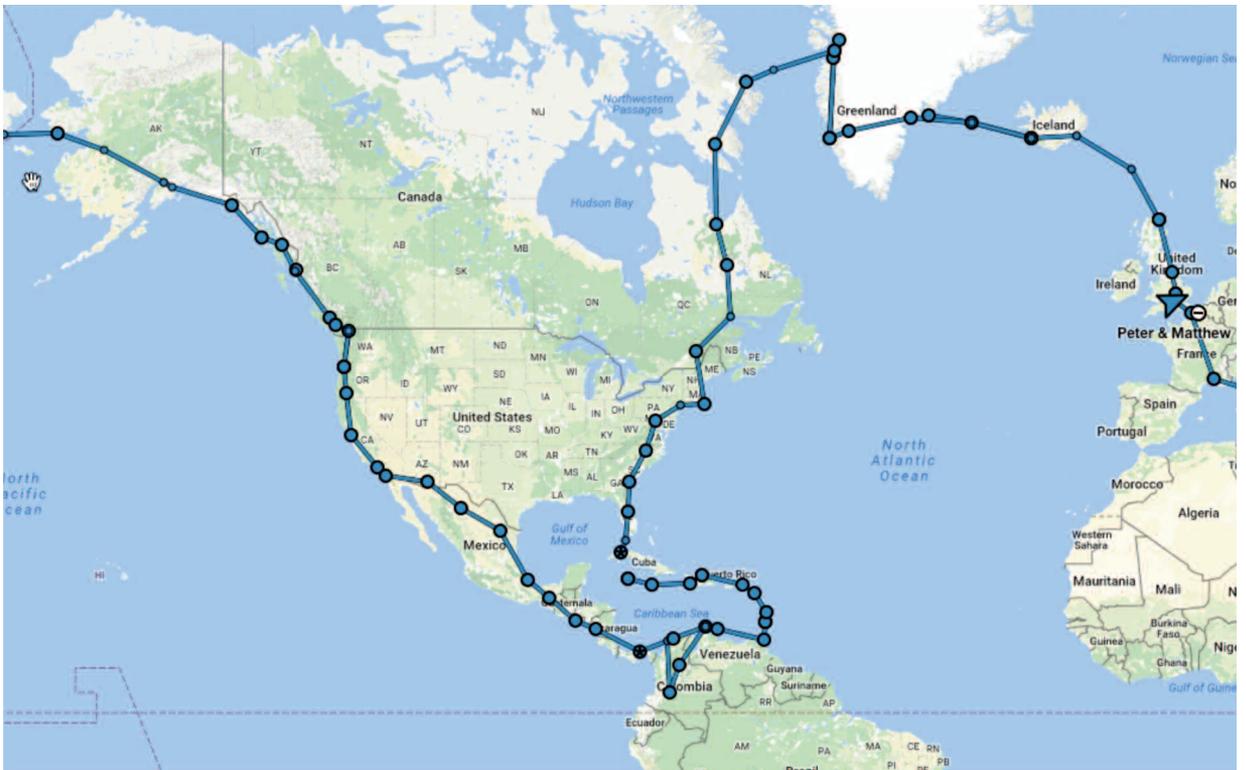
we agree a more southerly route, and then lose communications!

Dhahran then instructs us via relay to return to Al Ahsa to “avoid military activity”. We obey reluctantly, and probably sensibly. We work out that if we can take off within two hours we will make Al Ain just before dark. We check that going north out of Saudi airspace routing Bahrain, Qatar, and UAE across the sea is acceptable to ALL, including Dhahran Military. It appears to be. We go through all the formalities again and refuel. Finally at 1 hour 55 minutes we lift again! We climb to 5,000 feet, change to Bahrain, Doha, UAE Control and then Al Ain Approach. It is an epic crossing after so much messing about, and we land at dusk.

In Al Ain DIGA is well looked after by Horizon, a local flying



A formal but warm welcome to Al Ain
Below: the route taken by Matthew and Peter





school. The next day we fly to Oman. Outward Bound Oman hosts us in Muscat and I make a short presentation at OBO's annual Sponsors Dinner. We then fly across the Gulf of Oman to clear customs at Gwadar in Pakistan, and fly on to Karachi. The vast sculptured mountain desert features of Pakistan are spectacular.

FUHZ alert

We did finally receive our India permit in Al Ahsa, six days before we needed it! Our next flight is to Ahmedabad. The visibility forecast is fumes and haze (FUHZ) and we can smell it. People are living in terrible pollution.

We climb away to 2,000 feet over a marshy delta. This becomes more parched and arid as we fly onwards. There is some confusion as to whether Ahmedabad will accept us as a helicopter direct to the apron at their airport with the runway closed by NOTAM for the hour of our intended arrival. In the

dithering we go back and forth across the Indus River three times! We also fly over Great Rann of Kutch, one of the biggest salt marshes in the world.

From Ahmedabad we fly to Indore and on to Raipur where the incessant use of the vehicle horn is now a frequent accompaniment to any road journey. From Raipur we fly to megacity of Kolkata. The sun is supposed to set at 18:00 local, but by 15:48, it had already disappeared down into the smog. It is like this all the way across the Indian subcontinent.

Kolkata's visibility was 2800m, the airport IFR, and we are granted SVFR to make the short hop to Bangladesh, our 10th country. In Dhaka we are first hosted at the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed. We stay at their Savar facilities and meet some special people helping spinally injured patients. Motivation International assists with wheelchair technology, and made this introduction.

Earth Facts

Population projected to grow to 8.3 billion in 2030, 9.7 billion in 2050

Educating girls ends poverty

950 million people still practice open defecation – in fact more people have a cell phone than a toilet!

1.8 billion drink water that is faecally contaminated

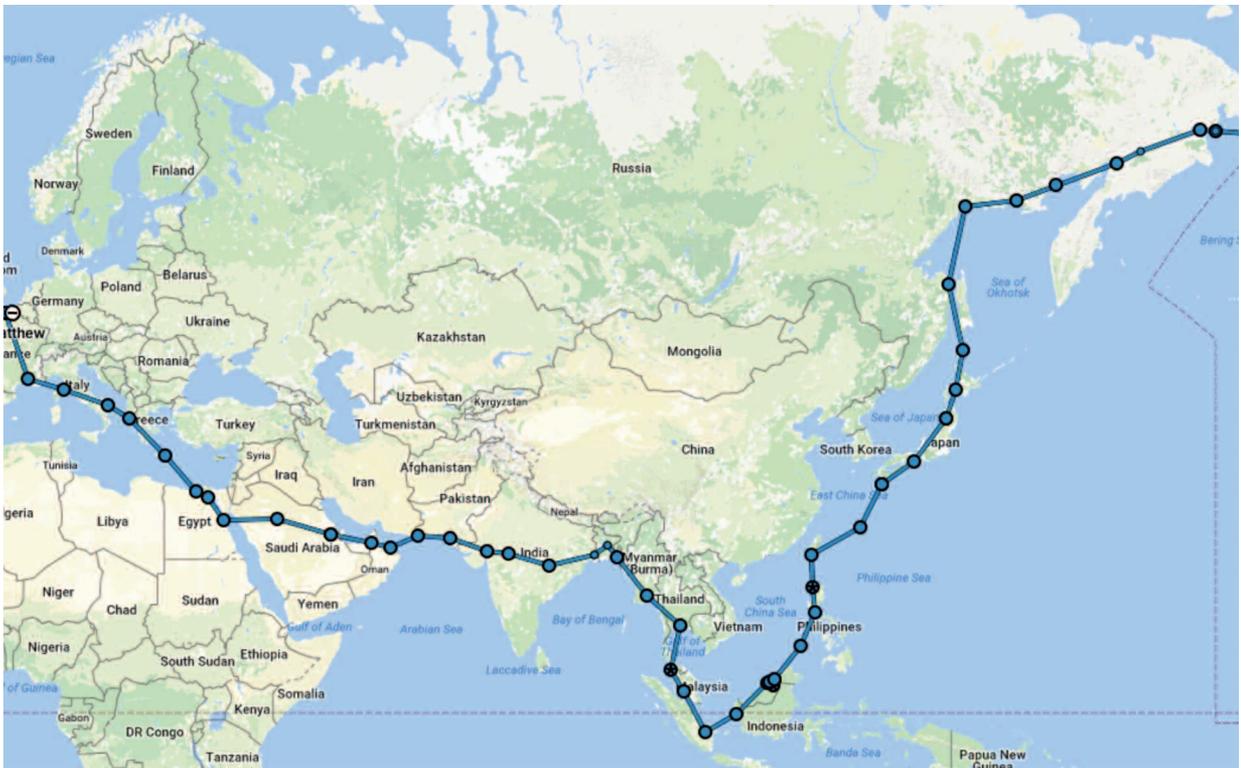
Earth grows enough food to end hunger, yet 800 million are undernourished

2 billion use wood for household energy needs

95% of energy still comes from coal, natural gas & oil

One forest provides 20% of the oxygen we breathe

99% of stuff we buy is trashed within six months





Save the Children, Bangladesh, also hosts us. We visit the Education for Youth Empowerment (EYE) program, which takes kids from the slums into an accelerated education program, and then helps them get employment. EYE is a great success over 25 years and 190,000 kids now enter annually. The government is scaling up the approach. We also spend a day with the Inclusive Protection and Empowerment project for children with disabilities and see how communities are helped to overcome poverty, malnutrition, birth complications and prejudice. The families are brutally honest about their poverty – “they cannot prioritise the disabled member over bread winners”. Even a rickshaw driver working all day might earn \$3 for his family of six!

We fly to Chittagong, and then on to Yangon, Myanmar and U-Thapao, Thailand. We are now flying across forests with the

visibility improving, and the cloud buildup presenting the main aviation challenge.

At U-Thapao we are treated to possibly our most bizarre clearance cockup of the whole journey. We are cleared for a taxiway departure. Then instructed to wait, then cleared for a runway departure, then instructed to standby on our startup! The consolation is front row seats for military manoeuvres. We count 19 Northrop F5s and eight military helicopters on the apron (Blackhawks, Hueys, and JetRangers).

We route 250nm out across the Gulf of Thailand to Langkawi, which is a United Nations site of special geological interest and

Below: children sift rubbish in the Dhaka slums
Right: beautifully decorated rickshaws in Dhaka
Bottom right: EYE programme students dance in Dhaka





Approaching Cairo airport in ever-present smog



THE CITIES

The sprawling mega-city of Karachi



Smog blights visibility over Jamshedpur



Even worse smog over Dhaka, Bangladesh





beauty. It is raining as we approach. On day 26 we fly to Subang, Kuala Lumpur. With the mixture of fading radio signals and accents, we zigzag down the coast avoiding Restricted Areas, past a big mountain called Kheda Peak, and close to Penang. It is beautiful low-level flying.

The Cempaka team greets us and helps David Cross, who has flown out for DIGA's first service. The Experimental Aircraft Association also meets and hosts a very nice evening for us. We fly in combination around the sights of KL, including landing in the city at Titivangsa. KL is a mega-cosmopolitan city, with horrible traffic, and a wonderful mix of Malay, Indian and Chinese

influences. It is hot and humid with intermittent thunderstorms.

On day 31 we fly to Palembang, Indonesia. At one stage we are at 300 feet low-level just under the cloud and about 250 feet above the palm oil trees. Most tropical forests across Malaysia and Indonesia have been cleared to make room for this vast monoculture of oil palm plantations – destroying critical habitat for endangered species, including rhinos, elephants, tigers and orangutan – and damaging these 'carbon sinks'. We cross the Equator with about 150nm to run to Palembang, which is twinned with Moscow, The Hague and our second antipode, Neiva on the other side of the world in Colombia.

On the way to Pontianak we have the best visibility of the journey so far. We continue to Miri in Malaysia, crossing back into the Northern Hemisphere. We dodge the rainstorms and hop into Mulu, a UNESCO Biodiversity Hot Spot. Gunung National Park and the Marriott Mulu host us jointly. Mulu is an amazing humid jungle and cave system habitat, and this is the

Above: EAA welcomes DIGA to Kuala Lumpur
Top right: DIGA in flight south of Kuala Lumpur
Right: palm oil plantations, an environmental nightmare
Below: panoramic shot of DIGA at Mulu





first time we have heard nature making more noise than humans. It is an honour for me to carry a letter from Nigel Winser (my Three Journeys Round mentor) to Nyapun, one of the original Penang tribesmen who supported the Royal Geographical Society expedition in 1977/78, 40 years ago.

Mulu receives about 9m of rain a year. However the day we leave it is clear, and we can fly up the Hidden Valley and to the Pinnacles before heading to Brunei. We become the first civilian aircraft to visit the 7th Flight of the British Army Air Corps base at Seria in Brunei. We have been invited to celebrate the 60th anniversary of 7AAC. We thoroughly enjoy our







stay in the Officers Mess of the Gurkhas, with DIGA enjoying the company of Bell 212s, while we make a short video with the British Forces Radio Services.

We continue our journey flying in a north westerly direction past Kinabalu to the Philippines; first to Puerto Princesa; then to another smoggy megacity, Manila; and, finally reaching Laoag. At the top of Palawan, we fly over El Nido, which is currently rated the “most beautiful beach in the World”.

Fever strikes

On day 43 we make the water hop to Taiwan, landing in Kaohsiung, which is IFR, 3,000m and smoggy. On entry Quarantine suggest I am

carrying a fever! I had been feeling exhausted since Puerto Princesa. Blood tests confirm I have Dengue Fever. The Taiwanese authorities explain the precautions I need to take not to infect any of their mosquitoes, and they fumigate my hotel room! Dengue Fever slows me down all the way to the top of Japan, and fortunately is no worse than that.

Kaohsiung to Okinawa in Japan requires serious calculations to get the winds, cloud cover, distance and refuelling options right. Mother Nature delivers the advertised winds and we use them. Flying up the volcanic island chain is beautiful and turbulent. Naha is a joint military airport and there is

again military activity, including transport planes, F15s, Chinook and Apache helicopters. We fly on to Kagoshima, and then Osaka. The hot and humid temperatures are now behind us. In Osaka we meet up with Tomasz, who is completing a solo circumnavigation in his 30 year old Cessna 152.

Japan is beautiful and orderly. The valley floors between the forested hills are farmed with stunning, level rice paddies; the hillsides are forested; the cities are enormous; the mountains are huge; and the multifunction toilets would wash your face if you let them! However, the flying administration for foreign registered aircraft is frustrating. Getting permission to

Top left: Brunei-based 7 AAC personnel welcome DIGA
Left: the beautiful landscape of Fukui, Japan



change each flight plan due to weather proves cumbersome and we end up delayed in Akita.

Day 51: We fly to Tomakomai and on to Russia. We approach Waianai, the northernmost point of Hokkaido, at FL080, VFR on top with Rishiri volcano poking way above the clouds to our left. We see a 737 below us (also talking to Sapporo Control). It climbs to 6,000 feet to remain clear of us, on a reciprocal heading and comes straight up out of the cloud 2,000 feet below us.

MAK General Aviation has worked extremely hard to secure our permissions. Everything is set up with the Russian CAA for us to fly a long way, during the weekday opening hours through remote Eastern Russia including refuelling at airports without English. We will fly 2,500nm in four flying days: Sakahlin to Nikolayevsk (refuel/overnight) to Okhotsk (refuel) to Magadan (r/on) to Manily (r) to Anadyr (r/on) to Provideniya to Nome, Alaska (r/on). Russia is very



Left: a more subdued reception at Sakhalin

Below: Russian military aircraft on Sakhalin island

Right: Altimeter shows 10,000 feet over the Sea of Okhotsk

Bottom right: Provideniya airfield, last stop before Alaska

European. Since the Arab, Indian sub-continent and Asian countries, we really haven't seen European features except for a few tourists. We enjoy Tomasz's company in Sakhalin, Magadan, Anadyr and Nome.

We are obliged to fly high in Russia and we are often VFR on top. We land at the metal airport of Okhotsk and at the remote helipad of a small fishing village of Manily – both non-English. Control does speak English. We get landing

instructions via satphone, use hand signals on the ground and then reconnect with Control once airborne. It is fabulous. We are rewarded with beautiful experiences, snowy mountain range and tundra scenery, and a visit to Provideniya, the easternmost airport in Russia and the content of Asia.

On day 55 we cross the Bering Strait coasting into North America. We cross the 180° line of longitude and the International Date Line and land in Nome the day before. Because of the move from GMT +12 to GMT -8, we are being





Effusive welcome to Gwardar, Pakistan



THE PEOPLE

We were greeted by a friendly handling agent in Karachi



Friendly Border Guards greet us at Kolkata



Peter with schoolchildren in Dhaka





forced to bed four hours earlier than yesterday. So we don't really feel ready for bed yet in Nome.

We fly in combination with Tomasz from Nome via Takotna, McGrath, Anchorage, Yakutat, Sitka, Wrangell and in to Prince Rupert, Canada. We get better at taking air-to-air video and pictures. Anchorage is a General Aviation haven for all types. We are privileged to fly through Princess William Sound and Glacier Bay National Park. We often have to pick our way through clouds and rainy sections, but we are treated to the stunning glaciers close up and beautiful, remote forested, low-level coastal flying.

En-route to Campbell River on Vancouver Island following the beautiful Canadian coastline we



Top left: DIGA flying low near McGrath, Alaska

Left: in Wrangell with Tomasz and his Cessna 152

Below: over the glacier at Prince William Sound, Alaska

Right: stunning scenery at Glacier Bay National Park, Alaska

Bottom right: DIGA on the Pacific Coast en route to Sitka





Lifeless desert in Saudi Arabia



THE ENVIRONMENT

'The world's most beautiful beach', El Nido



Stunning mountains near Khabarovsk in Russia



The beguiling Los Roques archipelago from FL075



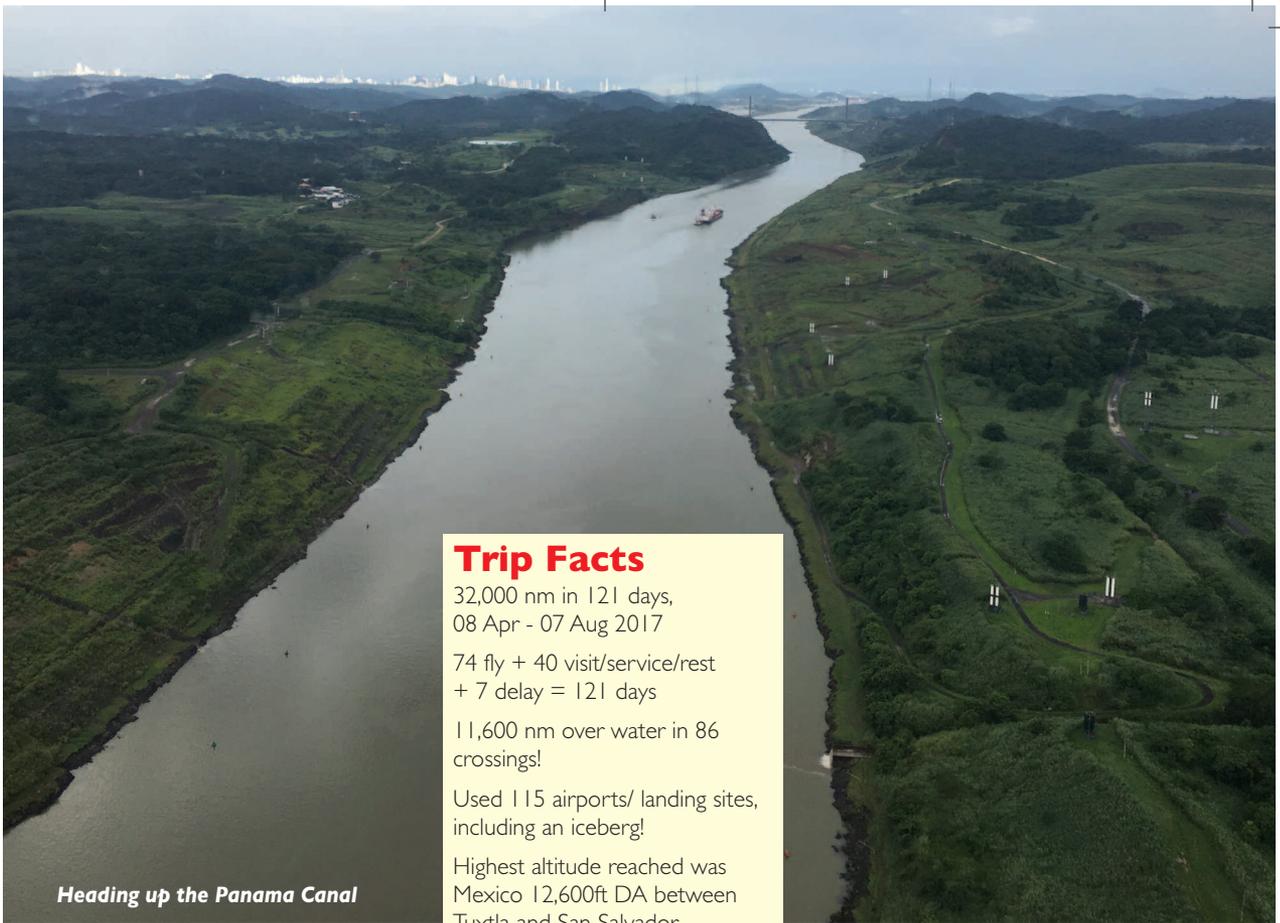


say a hearty goodbye to Tomasz who continues his closing route to New York.

DIGA comes through her second service in Campbell River without a hitch. Dave Cross had once again flown out, and the folks at E&B Helicopters are generous and welcoming hosts. We also manage to get some restful time in the beautiful surroundings with friends.

On day 64 we clear US customs at Bellingham and fly in to the Evergreen Museum right next to McMinnville Airport. We fly on via Medford to Oakland. To avoid hills en-route we are VFR on top at 8,500 feet! This time we accumulate some ice on the windscreen and the leg fins in the few minutes we were expose to the cloud. Feeling chastened, we take

Above: Dave Cross works on DIGA on Vancouver Island
Left: unusual bird's eye view of the Golden Gate Bridge



Heading up the Panama Canal

Trip Facts

32,000 nm in 121 days,
08 Apr - 07 Aug 2017

74 fly + 40 visit/service/rest
+ 7 delay = 121 days

11,600 nm over water in 86
crossings!

Used 115 airports/ landing sites,
including an iceberg!

Highest altitude reached was
Mexico 12,600ft DA between
Tuxtla and San Salvador

FL085 in Egypt, FL085 in Saudi,
FL110 in Russia

Highest airfield was Chihuahua,
Mexico (4,462ft)

Average airfield height was only
392 feet!

Landed in 42 different countries

Only two diversions for weather,
but lots of weather!

Re-planned access to Colombia,
and to avoid Venezuela

Cycled twice through Temperate,
Arid, Tropical, Continental, and
Polar climate regions

Delays for weather, permits in
Japan and for Colombia

Average of 4.5 hrs each of 74
flying days (engine on)

Average of 2.7 hrs over the
121-day journey (engine on)

Longest day at the controls was
in Colombia 8.6 hrs flying
Cartagena to Barrancabermeja to
Neiva to Barrancabermeja

this as a serious learning point!

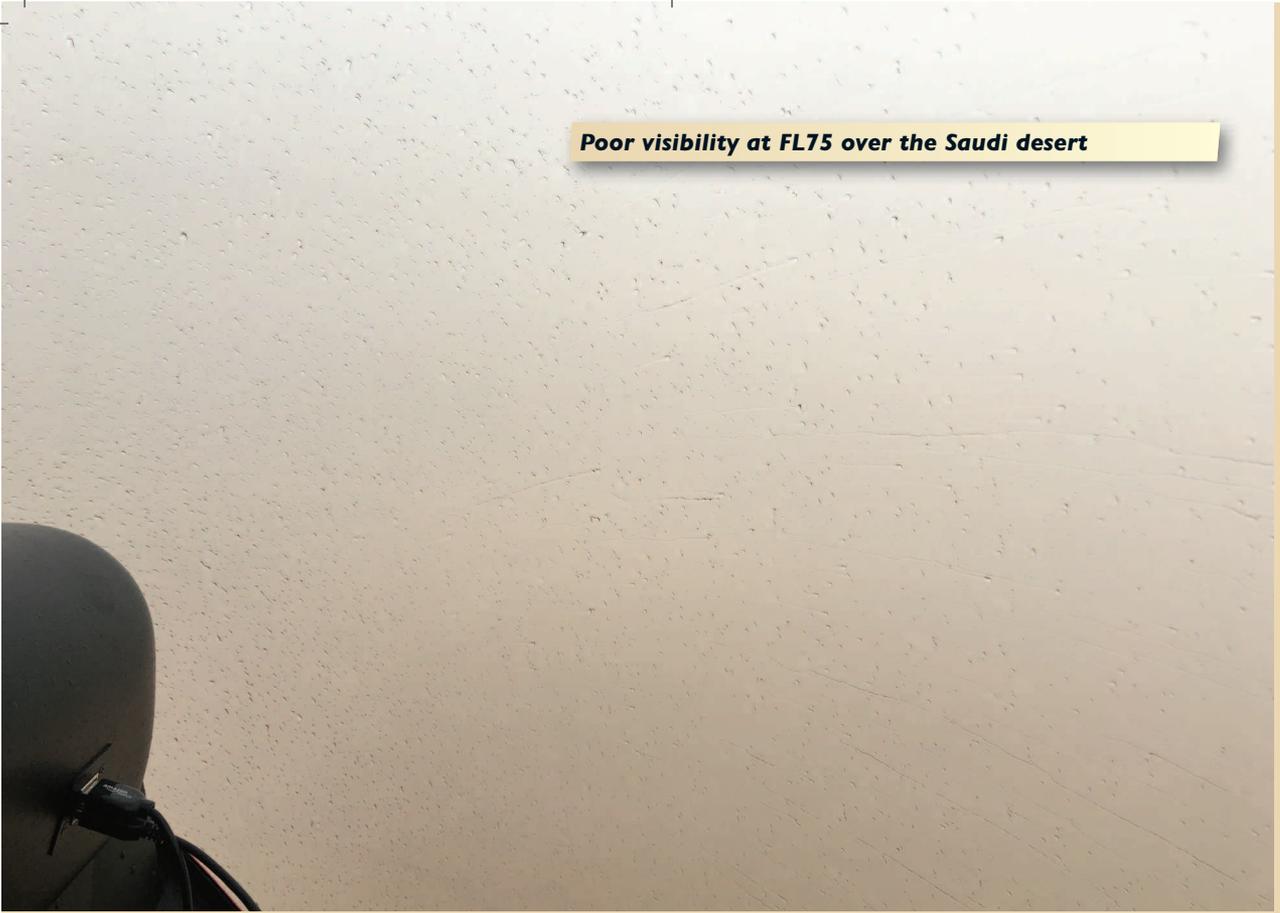
From Oakland we fly DIGA under the Golden Gate Bridge and down the beautiful Californian coast to Torrance, where the Robinson Helicopter Company hosts us. DIGA is examined and pampered. We fly in perfect weather to San Diego, where we were kindly hosted by Robert De Laurentis, another Earth-rounder. By day 72 we are ready to head for Mexico and Central America for a rendezvous in Managua. The desert around Tucson and Chihuahua is hot and thermally bumpy with dust devils like parts of Africa. We didn't see any Chihuahuas in Chihuahua! Monterrey to Tampico to Veracruz is dramatic mountain scenery, followed by coast-wise flying low-level.

Our point of exit from Mexico is Tuxtla. We must negotiate high mountains in a corridor between two restricted areas, VFR on top of cloudy weather, find a hole for our

descent, negotiate the local rainstorms, and then get into Guatemala City at 4,500 feet. We cross the border into Guatemala, and the lush forest and cultivated fields and wonderful shapes continue. However, here it is raining, with heavy downpours and lightning (gulp). We reach San Jose, a small airport on the coast, about 25nm directly south of Guatemala City (inland).

All routes to Guatemala City are shrouded in cloud and the San Jose Controller is persistently requesting our intentions and fuel status. GASE confirm we can and may go 90nm down the coast to our next destination for tomorrow, San Salvador. We inform San Jose of our intentions to divert. The Controller insists we either land at Guatemala City (not possible) or divert to his airfield (not a POE). We ignore him. It crosses our minds that we might be intercepted! In the meantime, GASE has already

Poor visibility at FL75 over the Saudi desert



THE WEATHER

Spectacular scenery near the Hidden Valley



Coping with grim weather in Kaohsiung, Taiwan



VFR on top at FL 110 over Russia





contacted Guatemala and San Salvador (MSSS) changed our hotels, and switched the World Fuel Services fuel supply. Brilliant virtual team working!

The scenery in El Salvador is jungle with interesting geological shapes, housing along the side of roads, and some palm oil plantations. Unfortunately the cloud is still sitting at a base of the hills inland. We talk to San Salvador Approach and make the decision to divert again to the San Salvador Airport on the coast (MSLP). With six minutes to run GASE switch logistics again. Approach calmly

changes us over to MSLP Tower. What a flight, and what a day it has been!

We both feel the earthquake tremor in our hotel that night! Day 76 we had a great low-level flight past a nasty weather cell with lightning, and then along a string of beautiful volcanoes into Managua. Rene Chamorro is our generous host here and we talk about flying, boating, politics, Brexit and sustainable development. Staying in Granada is beautiful and we see the lava hole at Masaya.

Looking ahead to Colombia, I anticipate avoiding Medellin's high

mountain weather (after our recent experiences), with a new route to Neiva using the Magdalena River System: Panama City to Cartagena to Barrancabermeja to Neiva. We fly southwest across Lake Nicaragua, the jungle of Costa Rica and over the Caribbean Sea, then up the Panama Canal in to Panama City. The pop up storms and low cloud are unpleasant. We experience a delay here waiting for the Colombian permits. I was able to catch up on all my journey administration and see some of the city with Matthew. With the continuing unrest in Venezuela, I



Above: beautifully preserved pre-revolution cars in Havana

also anticipate options for avoiding Caracas: Maracaibo to Bonaire to Trinidad.

The administration leaving Panama takes two hours more than we estimated and it is 11:00 when we lift for Cartagena. We follow the Canal and cross the Golfe De San Blas with its 378 beautiful islands. Then we strike out across the sea and have to dodge more horrendous pop up rainstorms. South America is our fifth continent.

Day 84: Cartagena to

Barrancabermeja to Neiva to Barrancabermeja becomes our longest day at the controls – 8.6 hours flying. We are up at 04:30 local and rewarded with a beautiful sunrise. The return leg gives us each a different side of the beautiful views of the Magdalena River valley system with the high mountains each side. The objective was Neiva, our second antipode. We get all the FAI paperwork signed and a ceremonial picture with the ATC Controller for the album.

We receive news that Venezuela has now shut its airspace to General Aviation traffic. Plan C then: We

fly from Colombia to Aruba, facing huge headwinds brought by the trade winds. These remain with us across the Caribbean. We are again very lucky with the weather and make a big sea crossing from Aruba to Trinidad via Bonaire. In doing so we see three stunning archipelagos from 7,500 feet and beautiful CB cloud formations rising to 35,000 feet (gulp). The Los Roques archipelago comprises 350 islands, cays, and islets. The sight is a mesmerising treasure.

From Trinidad our intention is to fly the island chain of Granada, St Lucia, refuel at Martinique,

We do not currently live within Earth's means

Sustainable Development means living within Earth's means. It is a balance between *how many* people use Earth and *how* people use earth. We use the equivalent of 1.6 planets-worth of nature to provide the resources we consume and to process the waste we produce. Protecting enough of nature's wild habitats, wild animals and plants, pollinators, etc. against environmental drivers such as habitat loss, pollution, climate change, etc. is critical.

Game changers

There are three game changers, namely:

- ending extreme poverty
- respecting absolute planetary boundaries
- accounting for people and the planet, and not just profit (Everybody has rights and Nature is not free).

ONLY by raising the living standards of the poorest, in an environmentally friendly way, will population growth stop at 9 billion people in 2050.

Hans Rosling, <https://www.gapminder.org>

ONLY by respecting absolute planetary boundaries will the biosphere still support humanity beyond 2050. Johan Rockström,

<http://www.stockholmresilience.org>

ONLY with economic development serving society, which operates within a stable biosphere, will humanity enjoy sustainable growth. Kate Raworth, Doughnut Economics and Pavan Sukdev, The Economics of Ecosystems & Biodiversity

Reaching for Sustainable Development

Living well and within Earth's means is not out of our reach. Earth is extraordinary place but she needs our help to save us!

We will need to change life styles, which will be a social, technological and political journey to the mid-century, 2050:

- Stabilising the population in a low carbon world.
- Feeding a 9 billion population world with sustainable food.
- Building two thirds of the cities we still need in a sustainable way.
- Managing biodiversity effectively, building resilience and benefitting economically.

Read about this project <https://www.threejourneysround.com/context>



Dominica, Guadeloupe, Montserrat, stay on St Kitts & Nevis, refuel at Beef Island (BVI), Puerto Rico, and then on to Puerto Plata in the Dominican Republic. With the addition of a 'divert' to Argyle to sit out another big rain cell en-route to St Lucia, we experience the wonderful cultural melting pot of the Caribbean.

The Dominican Republic shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti to the west. Its terrain comprises rainforest, savannah and highlands, including Pico Duarte, the Caribbean's tallest mountain. Dean Grieder was a gracious host in Puerto Plata. Together we visit the DREAM Project, which is currently providing quality education for over 7,000 youths aged 3-24.

Day 92 we make the short flight over the border to Port au Prince in Haiti, which is one of the poorest countries on earth. After clearing formalities, we are grateful to MAF who look after DIGA at their base. We meet Michael Robison of OnePebble staying at our hotel. He provides resources for local initiatives to self determine. There

is room in his truck for us to join a drive around the sights of Port-au-Prince. We visit an orphanage, and meet the Director of Haiti Team Challenge, which provides leadership development for the 'future leaders' of Haiti.

We fly on via Montego Bay to Cayman for a short stay with Matthew's friends. From there we are really looking forward to Cuba. We again fly over beautiful atolls to the east of Isla de la Juventud on the way to Havana.

We find Cuba wonderfully vibrant and beautiful. However, it reminds me of the officialdom I saw in Belarus in 2015. The four airport officials watch TV with nothing to do. They check each other's badges

Above: flying along the East River over Manhattan

Below: endless tundra country in northern Quebec

raising their sunglasses to look at photographs each time one of them enters or leaves the room. Clearly they think someone is watching them!

Canada!

We lend the Royal Canadian Mounted Police \$850. Their diplomatic flight didn't have any cash to leave Cuba! They pay us back in Key West. We cross the Everglades and fly to Kissimmee, then Savannah, Raleigh and into Frederick, where we are hosted by





*Flying along the glacier tongue
near Ilullisat
Below: mesmerising sea ice
patterns over the Davis Strait*





AOPA who make a neat video of our journey.

From Frederick we fly to White Plains, New York for a reunion with Tomasz. We fly the east and west legs of the Hudson River low-level routes taking in Manhattan, the Statue of Liberty and basically the amazing Big Apple. The Nantucket Flying Association hosts us at our next stop. As probably one of the 'poshest' places in the US, Nantucket is a massive contrast to Haiti and Dhaka. We visit the Whaling Museum and the Linda Loring Nature Foundation.

On day 105 we arrive in Quebec where Capitale Hélicoptère host our final service at their beautiful facility. Dave Cross gives DIGA his best attention and she is ready for the last leg to higher latitudes.

We set off to Sept-Iles up the great St Lawrence River, on to Schefferville for the night, and then Kuujuaq for fuel. Sparsely forested tundra slowly replaces the forest. At Quaqtac we launch across the sea towards Baffin Island, the 5th biggest island in the world, which we will cross to reach Iqaluit. The tundra is now almost sheer rock with mosses and many lakes, rivers

Above: Peter with DIGA on the Three Journeys Round iceberg
Right: gaily painted buildings in Qasigiannuguit in Greenland
Top right: explorer Mikael Strandberg (in dark glasses) and family

and other pools of water. Way out we can see our first free-floating iceberg!

After fighting off the 'twin-engine mosquitoes' we leave Iqaluit early for Qikiqtarjuaq. The scenery is now desolate, remote, rocky, undulating, with water pools and remnants of snow. We are approaching the Cumberland Peninsula, part of the Arctic Tundra Biome, which is the world coldest and driest biome.

Qikiqtarjuaq's runway is given in True degrees, thus 033T/213T. Pressed for time we set off across the Davis Strait, enjoying utterly breathtaking views of the sea ice. We will be in the Arctic for a few days. 60nm from Qikiqtarjuaq we still have the mosaic of sea ice beneath! It looks perishingly cold, but we are a sunny 5° C in the cockpit. We cross the 69° of latitude north. We can now see the

Great Glacier ahead of us. Ilulissat is known as 'Iceberg City'. The icebergs come from the mouth of the fjord, pushed out from time to time over the underwater moraine field by the Great Glacier about 30 miles up the fjord and feeding it.

We descend to 100 feet to fly a pattern between icebergs. We are speechless, taking pictures. We spot two whales – humpbacks, we think. Jørgen is on duty in Ilulissat Tower when we land. With him as our guide we fly every glacier around Ilulissat. And yes we did, we set DIGA down on a big iceberg in Disko Bay and claim her for Three Journeys Round!

On day 112 we make a short flight south to Qasigiannuguit, a tiny fishing village, to be greeted



warmly by and stay with explorer extraordinaire, Mikael Strandberg and his family. The discussions are stimulating. Next day we depart to Nuuk where again we make more special friends. There is no road connecting any of the towns in Greenland.

Our final flight in Greenland is from Nuuk to Kulusuk across the icecap. We climb progressively to 9,000 feet and take in the gorgeous views of the fjords, the sea ice, the low cloud/ fog below, and the ice cap approaching ahead. It is another gorgeous, still day and the Greenland icecap is the most beautiful desert of them all! Back at sea level we fly low for the last 40nm into Kulusuk drinking up as much of the pristine broken sea ice



Tabular iceberg near Ilulissat in Greenland

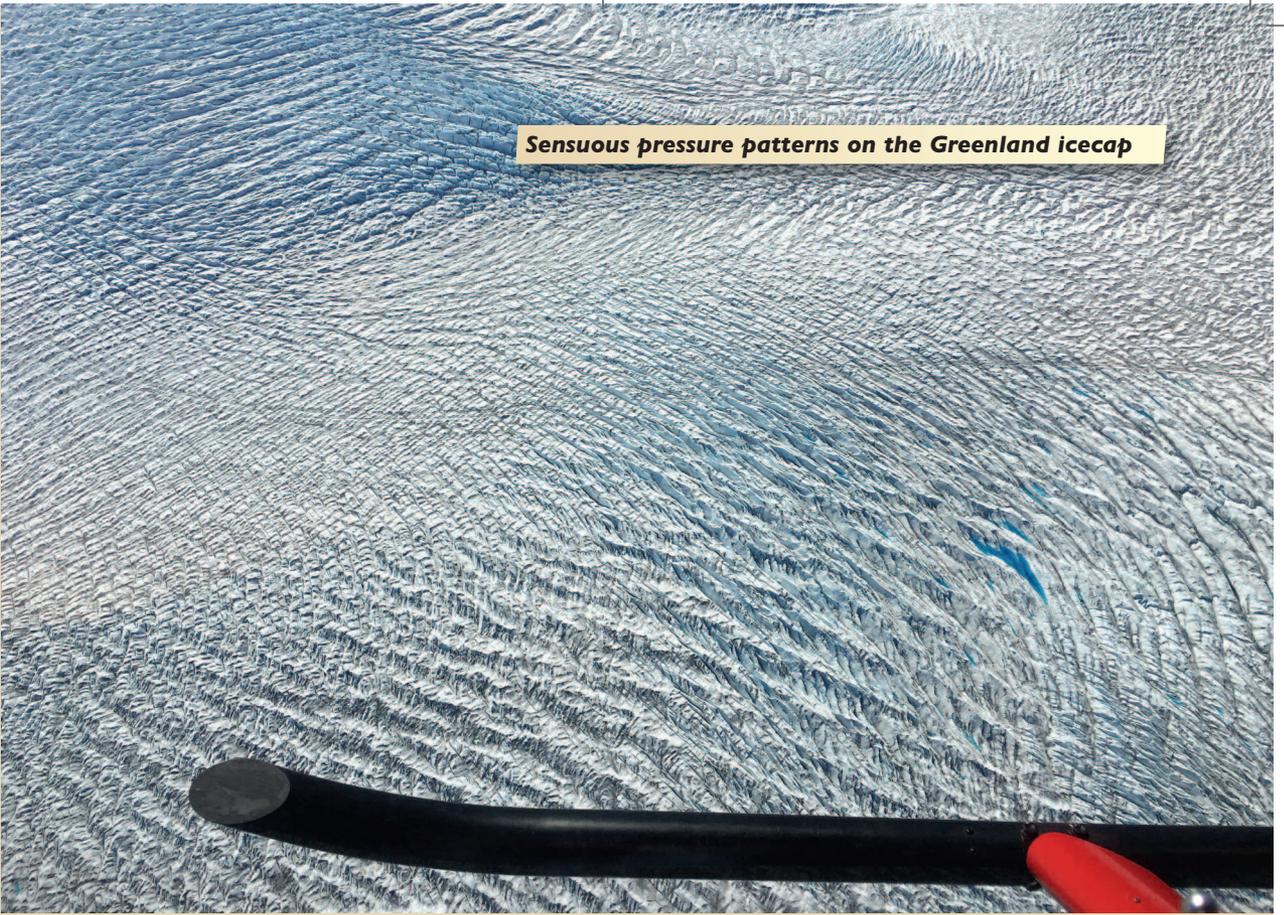


THE ICE

Low-level over the sea ice near Kulusuk, Greenland



Sensuous pressure patterns on the Greenland icecap



The Greenland icecap seen from FL095





scenery as possible.

The next day we fly VFR on top at 3,000 feet to Reykjavik via Hornafjordur. We pass through the beautiful Faroe Islands, on to a warm welcome in Wick, then down the east coast of the UK to refuel at Bagby. We land at Sywell to prepare for and wait out our timed return to Booker on Monday morning.

On day 122 we land at Booker in light drizzle. Welcome home! We dismount from the Three Journeys Round

Left: abandoned Dew Line early warning station in Greenland
Below: flying up a fjord en route to Nuuk





configuration for the last time on the RTW 2017 Journey. Physical mission accomplished! There are hugs and kisses. It has been a monumental effort by our extended team. We feel like we have achieved something important.

Surprising, I don't feel tired, possibly because I have shared the workload with Matthew and the autopilot. I work hard to get my fitness back. Sharing and telling people what we have done and preparing for next journey Round

South America becomes my full-time job once again. I have so many people to thank and so much to do. This journey has been life changing for me.

<http://www.threejourneysround.com>

The highlights

Peter picks his standout sights, moments and understandings from his circumnavigation:

- Everybody we met was generous and friendly. People are interested and interesting.
- People do not yet see the consequences of their collective actions on the Earth. It doesn't matter where they are from: developed USA to under-developed Greenland – plastic is litter. People seem to exist (or survive) in their own system.
- The pristine forest habitat in Asia has gone. The land is used for growing palm oil trees with devastating consequences for the animals that live there.
- The poor do not want charity; they need a level playing field and fair trade.
- White deserts are stunning. The ice caps, glaciers, fjords, icebergs, azure blue water, the ink-blue sea, so beautiful.
- The hot deserts still mesmerize.

Outstanding projects:

Visit to Save the Children – Education for Youth Empowerment (EYE) programme, Dhaka, Bangladesh. The EYE programme takes kids from the slums or domestic working, who have no education, into an accelerated education programme and gets them into further education or vocational education, then helps them get employment. It is a wonderful journey. About 190,000 kids now enter EYE every year and the government is scaling up the approach with STC technical help. EYE is a great success story.

Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP) in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Michael Robison, Haiti – supporting orphans, providing resources, and distributing food through One Pebble.

Best flying?

Greenland glaciers, icebergs, fjords and icecap – breathtaking.

Or: Magdalena River system from Cartagena to Neiva, and back to Barranquilla in Colombia. 11 hours of stunning mountains and river delta.

Landing on an iceberg in the bay off Ilulissat, Greenland

Flying the Hudson, Harlem & East Rivers around New York

Hovering in front of the Twin Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur

Flying over the archipelago of atolls called Los Roques, near Venezuela

Best technology?

The Genesys autopilot we had sponsored on to the helicopter for the trip

The tail rotor cover from the dust

The sponsored clothing
Crystal stick (for underarm)

Right: home to a drizzly Booker after the adventure of a lifetime

