

Polly Mary Anne Vacher, Aviatrix

“For the unique contribution to the Experimental Mirce Mechanics by collecting functionality data while circumnavigating around the globe via poles.”



Polly Vacher receiving Grand Fellowship of the MIRCE Akademy, from its President Dr Knezevic, at the end of her record breaking trip around the world, at Birmingham International Airport, UK, on 17 May 2001.

Date of birth: 13 January 1944.

Marital Status: Married with three (grown up) sons.

Professional:

- Qualified physiotherapist trained Middlesex Hospital, London.
- Musical and singing training at Trinity College, London.
- Licentiate of Trinity College, London.
- Bachelor of Arts (Music), Open University
- Masters degree in Music Education, University of Reading
- UK Private Pilot's Licence, 1994.
- Australian Private Pilot's Licence, 1994.
- Australian Instrument Rating, 1995.
- UK Instrument Rating, 1997.
- UK Commercial Licence, 1999

Career:

- Physiotherapist, Middlesex Hospital, London 1963-65.
- Physiotherapist, St. George's Hospital, Tooting 1965-66.
- Physiotherapist, Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, Oxford 1966-68.
- Music teacher, in school and private 1978-present.
- Director, Fregon Aviation Ltd., 1996-present.
- Fund raiser, "Royal International Air Tattoo Flying Scholarships for the Disabled (in memory of Sir Douglas Bader)", 1997-present.

Interests: Flying, skiing, tennis, music (especially giving concerts for charity), flying for the disabled, public speaking, Australia, fresh challenges.

From 1997 Polly has been one of five people, and the only woman, on the selection board for the "Royal International Air Tattoo Flying Scholarships for the Disabled."

Personal: Facing challenges has always been an essential driving force in her life. At the age of 45, she did a tandem skydive to raise money for charity. This changed the direction of her life. Polly just had to become a proficient skydiver. Polly did in 1990 and achieved 245 jumps by the time she gave it up as a hobby in favour of flying.

In 1994 Polly gained my UK Private Pilot's License, just before moving to Australia for 18 months because of my husband's work. Having held a flying license for only a few months, Polly hired a light aircraft and flew with my husband around the circumference of Australia, up the middle to Ayres Rock and Alice Springs and back across the Simpson Desert. With little experience in flying, this in itself was a challenge.

In 1997 Polly flew solo in a single engine Piper Dakota across the North Atlantic. Together with her husband flew around the periphery of the United States and Canada. Then she flew on her own back across the Atlantic. Half way home the lights failed on my primary navigation instruments.

In 2001 Polly flew solo around the world in the same Piper Dakota. On 17th May 2001, after 124 days of circumnavigating the globe through four continents, twenty countries and spending 232.45 hours in the pilot's seat, Polly arrived, on schedule, at her starting point, Birmingham International Airport. The biggest challenge of this flight was the sixteen hour crossing from Hawaii to California. Nine of those hours were in darkness. Three hours from Santa Barbara she suffered an engine failure due to fuel starvation. Technical details about this trip could be found in the monograph "[B2B](#)".

In 2003, on 7th May, Polly set off on record breaking journey around the World via the Arctic and Antarctic. On 27th April 2004, having flown over 60,000 nautical miles, Polly entered into history of aviation:

- The First woman to fly solo in single engine light aircraft over North Pole
- The First woman to fly solo in a single engine light aircraft in Antarctica
- The First Person to fly solo around the World via all seven Continents

All three world records have been achieved during "Voyage to the Ice", a project that started on 6th May 2003 from Birmingham International Airport. She flew to the North and finished at the same place on 27 April 2004 arriving from the South East. In between Polly flew for 497 hours, landed at 106 locations in 20 countries. She covered the distance of 60,000 nautical miles. Technical details about this trip could be found in the monograph B2B/(A+A) published by the Akademy.

To support on going research in Mirce Mechanics during this world record breaking flight Polly actively participated in a Global Research project undertaken by the Akademy. She meticulously and patiently collected data related to the in-service conditions of the aircraft, environment and pilot during the entire project. In total she recorded over 20000 data elements that are now used as scientific evidence in many research projects undertaken by the Akademy. Also, as the direct result of Polly's project the topics of Human Performance and Climatology have been incorporated into the Akademy's Master and Doctoral Programmes.

In 2007 Polly has successfully completed another Record breaking flight. This time was a flight around the UK landing at all of the airfields in the Jeppesen VFR Manual, between 21 May and 31 July 2007. The journey statistics: 221 Airfields visited, 158 flying hours, 19,000 nautical miles, 163 passengers, 96 disabled passengers and dreadful weather!

Polly has generated hundreds of thousands of pounds for The Royal International Air Tattoo Flying Scholarship for the Disabled in Memory of Group Captain Sir Douglas Bader.

Find out more by visiting the Wings Around the World Challenge Flight website:
www.worldwings.org

