

PROLOGUE

An aerofoil is a wing, or the blade of a propeller. As it moves through the air it generates lift, or thrust. At the wing tips, the higher pressure below the wing contaminates the lower pressure above with vortex formation. Vortices contain energy and vortex drag reduces the efficiency of the wing. There are parallels with management. At the trailing edge of an aircraft wing there are smaller aerofoils. These influence events. This is a story about flying told from a personal perspective somewhere behind the aeroplane.



1. *A Red Kite (Milvus milvus), a cousin of the Shitehawk (Milvus migrans), keeping an eye on our picnic near Didcot. The high aspect ratio wings with slotted tips are superbly adaptable for slow speed flight. Here they show a Hoerner configuration to gain the best lift from wing-tip vortex energy. At other times they are contoured upward like a classical winglet. This helps conserve the lower pressure over the upper surface from dissipation.*

2. *More trailing edge devices, this time on a Common Tern (Sterna hirundo) enjoying the Henley Royal Regatta with us. It maintains a high aspect ratio to its wings (the square of the wingspan divided by the wing area) whilst loitering but reduces the span and increases the loading to enable a high speed plunge to catch a fish.*

