



CLUB AND AIRPORT NEWS

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APRIL FOOLS DAY AGAIN

Well if you take into account, when Britain was an Empire the sun shone everyday, now we don't have an Empire, and everyday sunny days are no longer, we are confined to living under a cloud most of time. The days of the Raj, and all its pomp and ceremony have gone for ever. Contrary to popular belief it does not rain in the UK every day, it is a good idea to come prepared with some waterproof clothing, thereby keeping yourself psychologically prepared. Britain is an island surrounded by water and this fact alone influences our weather. Therefore it is often difficult to predict the weather, it can be sunny one day and raining the next, but somewhere else it may be a lovely day or even worse, so be thankful for what you have today. Tomorrow it could be raining again.



But, if you are preparing to fly further south, to the French Riviera you can look forward to much better weather and sunshine.

TRAFFIC LIGHT FAILURE

No more queues of traffic at the corner of Lebanon Gardens and the High Street, since these lights have been inactive. Drivers are cautious and considerate to others, for the simple fact they don't have to wait in a queue whilst the lights change to green, and not being frustrated by those who are on the phone or looking the other way, and by the time they get the vehicle in gear the lights have reverted to red again, road rage building.! Without the lights, traffic flows peacefully and the drivers remain pleasant toward each other, fantastic..!

Well it has been a month now, and the traffic light saga is on going – we at the Bugle cannot understand what was wrong with these lights in the first place..!

So much money must have been squandered on this light project, that there is no money left for hole repairs around Biggin Hill.

REMOVAL OF AIR TRAFFIC

Consider this one, how peaceful it would be if Air Traffic Control was removed for the weekends at Biggin, no queuing for take-off, no holding around Sevenoaks, just slot in and land – it worked before. Now here is another thought to consider, after the Air traffic Controller at Kennedy International took his children to work and allowed one of them to give an

instruction to a departing aircraft. We could have children on a kind of work experience at weekends as Air Traffic Controllers at Biggin Hill. Could be rather good fun for all concerned. They would learn something, and so could many of the weekend fliers who flock to Biggin. Hands up those, who think this could be a good idea..?

ANOTHER BRIDGE TOO FAR

Whilst we had Pegasus Bridge and the famous 'Bridge Too Far' at Nijmegen during World war II. This particular bridge hadn't been built, although 30 years ago it was an experience to have crossed this bridge for the first time and to have crossed it yet again with someone, or be able to converse with someone else who also had this wonderful experience. **'Pont de Martyrs'** is a bridge built by the French in 1957 across the river Niger adjacent to the city of Bamako, Mali, situated on the north bank. Access to the south side was essential as they built the new airport some 11km on the south side of the river which itself was 0.80km wide. The south side of the river was bush land in those far off days and quite exciting, as it was another world on the south side, a kind of free for all area.

There was a single track macadam road from the airport to the bridge. Overtaking other traffic or passing opposite direction traffic meant vacating the hard surface, as the largest and heaviest vehicles maintained position on the tarmac,

and all others scattered off road. We had arrived at Bamako airfield late one fine morning in the 70's. After refueling and paying landing fees etc, we decided to have a lunchtime snack and a coffee before heading to town. Having satisfied our hunger we selected a taxi for the journey of 11km to town. His Japanese (Toyota) taxi is covered in a myriad of dents numbering several hundreds. How can you get so many dents on a car? (All the taxi's were like this!) Read on, it gets better. Suddenly we are engulfed by truck loads of soldiers and informed that the road is closed because the President is coming. No problem, we will go and have another coffee. After two hours, still no President. We enquire as to his arrival to be told he is coming. Finally it became dark and still no President. Eventually his plane arrived, the occupants retire to the VIP lounge for a drink followed by much activity when they exit. We and our taxi driver were assembled with something like 40 plus other taxi's and their occupants in a large circle, all facing the beginning of the single track road to town. After many tense minutes of engine revving and trying to bribe our driver to get going, I hit him on the back of the neck and he immediately broke ranks and roared off, not for the road, but the bush amongst the many tree stumps scattered all around with all the other taxi's emulating his driving skills. Not only was this dangerous, but suicidal, for not one of these cars had any working lights as they had all suffered similar damage whilst collecting dents. We careered



forward with vague silhouettes racing between the solid tree

stumps. We were seriously aware of the narrow approach to the bridge ahead from previous experiences of crossings in daylight, at a more leisurely pace. This was a stampede, similar to a herd of wilderbeast in their quest to get to the other side, coning into a single entry point with no rhyme nor reason for this obsession. Unbelievable madness! How were we going to get on this bridge with so many maniacs on a single quest? Well, our driver was a genius, he aimed his car for the slightest gap and wedged all others to one side, bang, bump, crunch, scrape, thump, we were first on the bridge, with a few more dents to his car. We rewarded him well for his achievement on completing his contract in relative safety. The bridge had a unique design, with a two lane road for cars and trucks, whilst the pavement was for pedestrians and motor cycles. A typical economic French construction, designed for maximum efficiency. You have only to cross this bridge but once, to appreciate this unique design.



This modern day picture does not do justice to the old days of over crowding and the need to get to the other side. 43 years on there is more than one bridge and improved roads around Bamako. The south side of the Niger river is now totally built up toward the airport.



The land of Mali is quite flat and suffers from much flooding. Whilst the construction of this bridge from a distance looks impressive, the scene when traversing atop the structure gave a perspective of sheer chaos. Who ever chose the name for this bridge must have realised the significant of such a name, because you had to be some kind of martyr to venture across this over populated bridge among the sheer chaos that presented itself at each crossing, day and night.

GORDON: FINAL FAREWELL

A final farewell to Gordon Jones was held at the Old Jail on the 27th March for those that were unable to attend his funeral due to location and short notice. Gordon enjoyed his weekends at Biggin Hill amongst his many friends. 30 – 40 friends attended this auspicious occasion with many photographs from Gordon's archive found in his garage, plus many of his motor racing trophies, there was also a memorable slide show showing images of several people from their almost forgotten days at Biggin Hill. Saturdays event was hosted by Graham Balls and assisted by



Peter Greenyer. Appreciation is also extended to Richard Chipendale who assisted Gordon with his Taxi business over the last year caring for his general domestic and social needs.

Richard and Gordon in better days



Old friends enjoy the slide show.



LUCKY PILOT FROM BIGGIN

Flight Lieutenant Mike Ling from Biggin Hill had a lucky escape along with his partner Flight Lieutenant Dave Montenegro of the Red Arrows synchro pair when they collided during rehearsals for the coming 2010 Airshows performing their famous crossover.



Our aviation expert has spotted a possible cause of this incident...!! One aircraft was destroyed, the other landed safely, but seriously damaged. Both pilots survived.



The Red Arrows team on their way to Hellica Air Force Base at Kastelli, Crete. with their first female pilot Kirsty Moore far left back row.

AIRFIELD PERSONALITIES



PAMELA ELLES: A woman of fortitude, on whom the sun shines. Pamela is a woman of sincere destiny, with a charming smile and a gracious vocabulary, exquisite to the core, cultured and well mannered with a most elegant English accent, each word and syllable pronounced with infinite eloquence. Pamela possesses a variety of wonderful stories ninety nine percent true, one percent being held in reserve, to skillfully embellish the relevance of the intriguing conclusions as the story unfolds, to a point at which much raucous laughter will erupt. Truly a lady of distinction, with the rays of sunlight, highlighting her station in life.

Pamela started life in the northern latitudes as a young lady enjoying life without a care in the world, until that unfriendly Bohemian Corporal Adolf Hitler started World War II. Well that certainly got Pamela's back up and she promptly, joined the Royal Navy Wrens serving on HMS Forth stationed in Scotland for a time. Learning the skills expected of a Wren of the Royal Navy. Fortunately Pamela was a member of the Rangers (a Naval version of the Girl Guides) prior to joining up.

This came in handy because she had already learnt the rudiments of Semaphore, Morse Code and tying knots, passing these skills easily.



Boat's Crew Wrens, of HMS Forth. Thirty seconds from deck to deck, down the iron ladders on the ship's quarter, out along the quarter beam, down the jumping boom ladder and into the boat. During these naval days (1945) Pamela almost became a film star. The film 'Perfect Strangers' featuring Deborah Kerr and Robert Donat, with a supporting cast consisting of Glynis Johns, Ann Todd and Roland Culver, was being filmed in Scotland. Pamela would act as a double for Glynis Johns scampering up and down the rigging. All very exciting at the time – how many can recall this film 65 years on – or ever saw it?



Pamela says these were wonderful heady days. "We were all determined to win this war and enjoy ourselves at the same time. Whilst we were all pleased at the wars ending, it changed our lives

and we all had to start working for a living". One last picture of four



very wind swept Wrens aboard a ship somewhere in Scotland.

Civilian life took over Pamela's life and indeed the others in this fading picture. In 1949 Pamela married a Squadron Leader (Robert McGoogan) of 12 Group, Nottingham, who flew Javelins.

Postings to Germany for a couple of years followed by a tour in Norway for two years, these were Pamela's introduction to airfields, almost as windy as ships at sea.

Inevitably this all lead to a posting to Biggin Hill where she has remained ever since. Pamela raised three children during these years.



Alison, Andrew, (Pamela) Neil.

During the years following life within the RAF fraternity Pamela became a Saleswoman selling Nordic Saunas. A job at which she excelled, they promoted her from Redhill to Reigate. This was not the best move as Saunas didn't seem to sell so well in Reigate.

Pamela became a legal secretary for many years with regular visits to the many club bars at Biggin Hill. In 1974 Pamela married Richard Elles a renowned Flying Instructor at Biggin Hill. Pamela moved further onto the airfield spending 4 years running Biggin Hill Flying Club with her CFI / Examiner husband Richard. Pamela smoked cigarettes with a very long cigarette holder which

could be quite a menacing affair if you happened to be standing nearby, burning a hole in ones shirt on more than one occasion. She would smoke a cigarette without flicking the ash off, until it almost reached the holder. Incredible control.



Pamela says flying is just an expensive hobby whereas gambling is cost effective...!??



This fantastic rainbow was spotted by Pamela one afternoon whilst



seeking her own 'pot of gold', she never missed a turn, whilst most scurried for their cameras to capture this rare moment which lasted just four minutes. Pamela loves nothing better than a game of poker or cribbage, or gambling on

two matches floating down the gutter.

Pamela celebrates 80th birthday ?



The Bugle cannot reveal the date..!

A poem written by three RN Wrens
Lorna Young (née Pringle)
Daphne John (née Bonnet)
Muriel Currie (née Strangeman)

Three old Wrens from The Rock are we,
Filled to the brim, with G and T.
We never thought in the days of yore
We'd celebrate here in double—0—four !
We sailed to The Rock in '43
When we were young, bright and free,
We all did our best for the Royal Navee
Three old Wrens are we !
We slaved in The Tunnel by night and day
Typing signals for ships in the bay,
And thought The Rock is twice its size
And changed to our bewildered eyes
The welcome they gave us was great to see
And now with sticks and replacement hips,
We stagger on while we reminisce,
On the sweet young things we used to be—
But now alas ! Three old Wrens are we !



Pamela's demure is never changing, her manner and style, a joy to behold, it is ever lasting.