



BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT BUGLE

News from our Airport at Biggin Hill - established 2005



CLUB AND AIRPORT NEWS
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BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT SOCIAL CLUB LTD
www.bigginhillclub.co.uk

In Ass. with BigginHillReunited.co.uk
1st April 2014



BIGGIN HILL FESTIVAL OF FLIGHT



14th JUNE 2014

Adult (16+) £15
Child (5-15 yrs) £7
Family (2 x adults 3 x child) £40

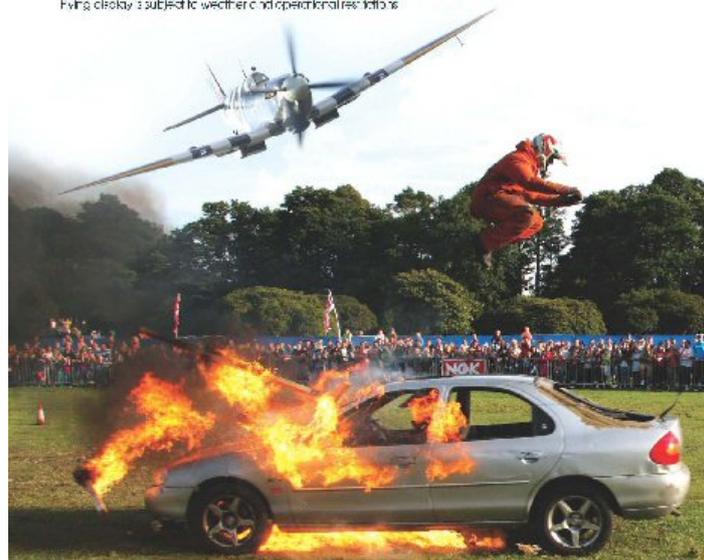
Ticket Line: 01689 300005
www.BHFOF.com
Gates Open 12 noon

London Biggin Hill Airport

50⁺ Display Seasons ROYAL AIR FORCE ARROWS

For more information and purchase of tickets, go to www.BHFOF.co.uk
Festival of Flight information line 01959 578571

Flying display is subject to weather and operational restrictions



Event prices for this event reproduced for clarity:

Adult (16+)	£15
Child (5-15 yrs)	£7
Family (2 x adults 3 x child)	£40

SOME OLD COMPANIONS

For the past 50 years plus there has always been a serviceable Percival Proctor flying at Biggin Hill. The 13th March 2014 was the last day as the editor JB, recalls the times he flew this historical gem.



JB and Cobby trying to understand the intricate method of controlling this two wheeled wingless wonder. The Wright Bros started with a bicycle, so don't laugh.



Singh of Falcon Air Services giving a blessing to the last Percival Proctor IV which has

sadly been relocated to another airfield. (see column one).

ANTARCTIC SURVEY PIC'S

Prior to their departure for the Antarctic in October 1983 they decided to have some formation pictures taken.



The pilots were Gary Studd, Brendan Obrien and Ed Merton. The editor took three pictures from within one of the aircraft, the bottom picture below shows the Proctor IV then owned by Lance Oakins the exterior camera plane appears like a small bird balancing on top of the wing of an Otter.



NO PASSENGERS PLEASE

I had been contracted by Socata to deliver a TB20 to Archer Field, in Queensland, Australia.

This had been arranged some three months earlier from the factory at Tarbes which was the normal procedure as it usually took some time to actually finalise each individual sale agreement.

The aircraft was ready and I had arranged the departure date for the Tuesday to be at my destination eight days later.

Friday afternoon prior to departure next week I was informed from the Socata office in Paris by a retired French Air Force General or some such rank to inform me that Rowley was flying over from Australia to accompany me on this flight.

I informed him that I normally fly alone, but as he (Rowley) was one of the people involved with the purchase the General thought it would be an exciting experience suggesting to Rowley that he should join me on this ferry flight.

I was rather shocked by this revelation of unwanted cargo I immediately phoned the factory and they had no knowledge of this arrangement.

Saturday: is a nice day at Biggin Hill and I am just about to taxi out on a training flight, when, Rowley appears asking questions of what we are doing, can we have a chat and when we are going to Tarbes. I told him to go to Heathrow on Sunday and I would meet him there or on the plane. Failing that I would be at the factory on Monday.

Sunday: I proceed to Heathrow and soon spotted Rowley, who stood out like a sore thumb. He informed me during the flight that he was looking forward to visit lots of places on the way as he had never been out of Australia before. He seemed to be under the impression that we would be doing a couple of hours each day. He had no idea of the distances to be covered, nor the time involved.

He explained that he could only fly for about 1 ½ before he had to relieve himself. Oh dear .!!

He also explained during the flight to Tarbes how he hated Bombay as he had to wait in the transit lounge during his journey to London for over an hour.

I said we weren't going to Bombay to which he seemed quite happy.

The planned departure day is Tuesday as I always like to spend a day (Monday) checking that everything is working properly and all the paperwork is complete and correct, spares for the journey, spare inner tubes, oil, cardboard funnels etc., generally packing the aircraft. The rear seat area is fitted with a 200 ltr fuel tank and a dinghy. Water and survival rations
Tuesday: departure day 10.00UTC
We are at the factory early in the morning.

Today's leg is Tarbes to the Greek Island of Corfu (Kerkyra). This is a 6 hour leg, a nice easy 1st day to get into the swing of things.

Departure time comes and goes, with Rowley still unhappy about certain things and complaining to the sales people, who are doing their very best to avoid him. I am beginning to think this journey won't even start.

He is not helping the preparation for the coming flight, even I am trying to keep out of the way so as to not to cause any further delay.

This day becomes lost totally and we end up back at the hotel.

I treat Rowley to a heavy night out at the Big Ben Pub and Le Cendréé restaurant, hoping we can get going early tomorrow as we have lost an easy day.

Wednesday: We are at the factory early and hopefully we can get airborne. Just as we are about to depart, when Rowley spots there is no fire-extinguisher and wants one fitted.

I told him to just pack it in the back as it will take too long to fit.

He is adamant, he wants it fitted. We are fast approaching lunchtime, more delay envisaged by me.

Finally the technicians return after lunch and I am thinking we can make Heraklion (Crete) and catch up lost time which is critical if we are to keep to our clearance schedule, and my rendezvous on Friday with my friends in Dubai.

I haven't revealed my plans of catch up to Rowley as it is best he doesn't know what is ahead.

He is not on a flying holiday as he was lead to believe from the retired airforce General.

We take off from Tarbes somewhat late toward Perpignan along the snow capped Pyrenees, onward past Corsica.



Calvi is indicated by arrow as we head for the Italian coast onward to Corfu and the eventual fading light, Rowley says he has never flown at night and asks what I am going to do as the sun was setting behind us. I explain that I am going to make a turn in a moment and take a picture of the setting sun.

Making a 360 turn I capture the setting sun and reset course.

It was only now, that I realised Rowley hasn't got a camera.!!

I haven't told Rowley of my main intention to go direct to Heraklion.

It is now 6 ½ hours since we had departed from Tarbes and very dark whereupon Rowley asks what are all those light below.

I respond, Corfu. Aren't we landing there? he says. I said we may as well go to Heraklion.

How far is that? 'Not far' I said knowing it was another 1 hr 35 mins, and he was already complaining about being cramped in a small aircraft cockpit.

Eventually the lights of Heraklion come in sight after 8 hrs 35 mins.

Rowley can't wait to get to the toilet and ignoring my advice to relieve himself at the rear of the aircraft.

He won't listen and heads for the Terminal building without luggage or passport.

I relieved myself behind the aircraft as I waited for the fuel man that I had pre-arranged just in case.

I refuelled the aircraft, paid the fuel man and gathered Rowley's luggage and my small bag and headed for the tower to pay the landing fees and file a flight plan. Walking into the terminal I find an exasperated Rowley who was trapped because he couldn't get out again without his passport.

We grab a taxi to take us to the nearest hotel as it is quite late and we are hungry.

At the hotel we change some money and find a Greek restaurant to have a good meal.

It is now sometime after midnight and Rowley suggest we go for a walk to aid digestion.

I declined, informing him we are leaving in just four hours.

Can't we leave about 10 o'clock, is his parting remark.

He is in for a rude awakening tomorrow morning and a very long day ahead.



Thursday: Just after sunrise we are heading eastward climbing to

FL110 before we can turn right to the VOR of Sitia and the Egyptian coast onward to Luxor which is about 5 hrs 25 min.

No sooner had we levelled out at the cruising altitude, Rowley was sleeping and slept for most of this leg, only waking when I began our descent to Luxor.

Luxor terminal building at this time in history was a round building with the control tower at the top and offices below.

The ATC officer was very friendly and appeared to be on duty for 24 seven. He even had a bed for sleeping and always offered everyone a cup of tea.

I often wondered what happened to this genial friend.

I used to take supplies of tea-bags for him whenever I passed through Luxor.

I introduced him to Rowley and he made some tea for him whilst I dealt with re-fuelling and landing fees. I took my time with these duties so that Rowley could have a good rest, as he was totally unaware of catch up time, that we are heading for Dubai for a day of rest and a B-B-Q with my Tasmanian pilot friend and other pilots.

Returning to the control tower Rowley is looking somewhat refreshed and says he is ready for a hotel bed.

I then inform him that the day was young and we should go to Dubai as tomorrow was Friday a day-off in this part of the world.



I forgot to mention that it was another 8 ½ hours away.

By the time we had started to cross the desert of Saudia Arabia it became dark again which confused my passenger even more, he has lost track of time completely.

We had previously done 1,252 nm and we are now adding another 2,372 nm making a total for the last two days of 3,623 nm.

We are greeted in Dubai after 7 hours in the dark around midnight.

We all proceed to my Tassie friends house for a well deserved drink.

Rowley was shown to his room and crashed out, totally exhausted.

Friday: A day of relaxation. I went to the airport early to settle landing fees, re-fuel and file a flight plan for Ahmadabad, bypassing Karachi in the hope of saving time, because Karachi airport is a big area which requires a lot of time wasting footwork.

It is B-B-Q time, so it is back to the house – Rowley has not risen, the party continues without him.



Around 21.30 he appears in a complete daze wanting to know if we are going for a drink and something to eat.

I tell him we are leaving in 3 hours. He is astonished, because he had slept since he went to sleep the night before and slept all through the day and into the night again.

He was totally disorientated, and even more confused, as it is still dark. With that I told him I was going to bed for a couple of hours.

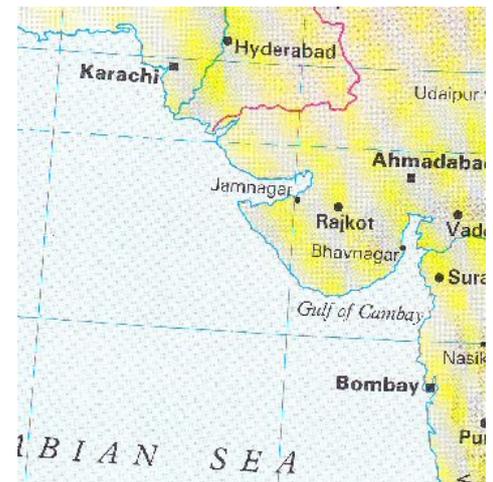
I am up at 02.00 hrs. Rowley is still fast asleep and totally unaware of the need to get on his feet.

Saturday:

We are transported to the airport of Dubai and within minutes climbing eastward to avoid the Jebbels on the east coast of the UAE.

Leaving the UAE FIR boundary it is still dark but the sky is beginning to lighten as the sun begins to rise.

This is the best time of the day to be flying, truly hypnotic.



Whilst I had a technical landing for Karachi, I had discussions with ATC at Dubai to see if we could go direct to Ahmadabad which would save time as Karachi airport is a large area and requires a lot of walking to the various services like, handling, flight planning, customs, immigration etc.,

I had discovered a friendly apron boy previously who could guide you to these various departments efficiently.

The only problem was keeping up with him.

He was tall with skinny long legs and when he walked, he went at the speed of a running man, truly..!!

Back to reality for the moment it is time to contact Karachi advising my intentions of proceeding direct to Ahmadabad.

They said I must land at Karachi probably because I had made a technical request.

I called Dubai again, they called Bahrain Centre but to no avail, they wanted their landing and handling fees, and of course wasting our valuable time.

We were in and out of Karachi reasonably quickly heading for Ahmadabad.

Contacting Bombay Centre, they instructed us to proceed direct to Bombay as we couldn't land at Ahmadabad today which was just 94 miles to go.

After a long argument over the radio we were forced to set course to Bombay nearly 300 miles and by the time we arrived it was just getting dark again.

We are parked on the Domestic side of the airport, which was easy for ferry flights because fuelling facilities were available, flight planning services etc.,

They didn't seem to worry about customs on this side.

Better still, the hotel (Centaur Hotel) a circular building was but a few steps outside the airport boundary.

A very nice hotel, all rooms faced inwards, overlooking a large garden, and pool. It also had a variety of restaurants and shops.

I left Rowley briefly in the hotel while I went to file a flight plan.

We had fallen foul of the system, having arrived at Bombay at their insistence. I told them we didn't have a clearance for Bombay.

'No problem Sir, you are welcome' Unfortunately, it is Saturday and the DCA office doesn't open again until Monday

One important factor flying across political religious boundaries is the fact that some observe Friday as the day of worship, whilst some have the weekend (Saturday and Sunday)

Whereas those who have Friday as their religious day, tend to run down on Thursday, prior to this day, so four days out of seven are virtually lost.

Flight planning becomes an art, if you want to keep the flow.

Back to the Centaur, I meet up with Rowley and inform him of our predicament, that we may be stuck here until Monday, he appeared non-plussed, probably because he hadn't caught up with the flight since we left Tarbes.

We had only been flying for three days, but he was already five days adrift. We were able to enjoy a nice meal with some wine at a

normal hour. It was getting dark, again which seemed to be the only time he knew.

Retiring to bed, I was woken late in the even by giggling and tapping sounds. Looking out the window I saw many people making a huge floral display on the ground.

They were still making this huge mural when the sun came up in the morning.

Sunday: After breakfast I went and asked some of the people what they were doing and they informed me it was for a wedding today (Sunday).

I was handed an invitation for this coming evening.

Rowley descends later in the morning and decides that he doesn't like this stinking Bombay and wants to leave.

I explain to him that come tomorrow we can re-apply for a clearance and will most likely get it and we can get going again on Tuesday morning, he wants to leave now!

'Ah! Now this is not so easy' I said to him. He asks 'why'?

'Because we are not in the country' we haven't cleared customs or immigration, so we must now drive to the other side of this huge airport and pretend we have just arrived saying we got lost and ended up at the domestic side.

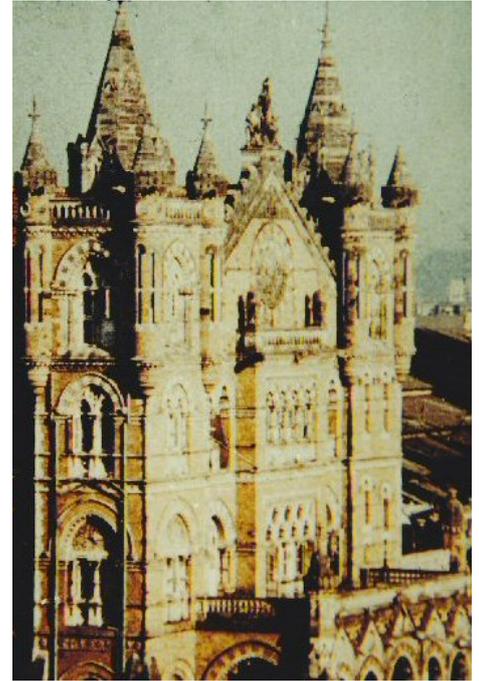
No problem Sir! We will come to your aircraft.

They took us back to the aircraft and duly sealed the aircraft door with sticky tape (on the right side only), they obviously thought it was American manufacture.

This meant I could still get into the aircraft without disturbing their tape, because I had two doors,

Prior to dispatching Rowley back to the International Terminal, he said he would see me at Singapore. I told him I didn't have a clearance for Singapore and if he wanted to see me again, it would have to be at Bali on Thursday.

Rowley was now on his own as he is driven to the otherside of the airfield to purchase a ticket out of Bombay.



Meanwhile Rowley is missing the sights he thought he was going to see on the way to Australia. Like Bombay railway station.

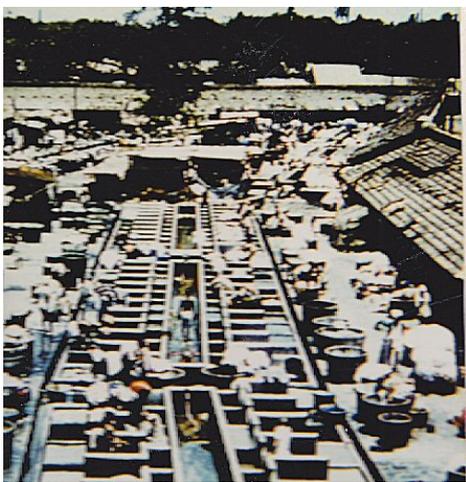
Unfortunately he has only seen a lot of darkness during this so called wonderful flight of many places. The fact that he didn't have a camera on his first ever trip out of Australia puzzled me.!!



The beaches of Bombay are not as exotic as the Mediterranean.

The following picture is of an open air laundry where ones clothes are bashed on a rock or slab of something else equally as hard.

Makes you think twice before subjecting your washing to the hotel laundry services.



This seems to have the desired effect and drying isn't a problem here as it is situated on the Tropic of Cancer where the temperature is always 30 C.



There are many statues of exotic art scattered around this City.

There are also many beggars on the street corners and prominent tourist traps.

It is fatal to feel sorry for just one individual, giving money attracts more beggars instantly.

The main automobile is the old Morris Cambridge built in India.

I return to the Centaur Hotel and join the wedding party which lasted late into the night.

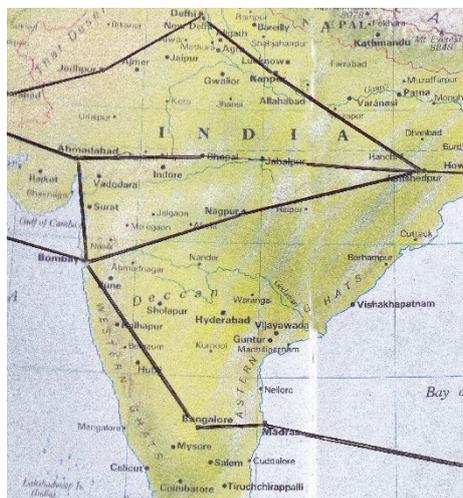
Monday (27). I make the short walk to the Offices of the DCA to obtain onward clearance.

I also got an apology for being delayed and began to understand that there was some mistake that I was diverted to Bombay.

Tuesday: I am at the airport early waiting for a clearance and hopefully a direct track to Madras. But they didn't seem to understand this, because my original request was for Ahmadabad to Calcutta.

Rather than create anymore aggravation I agreed to continue for Calcutta. (Rather than Madras) Shortly after this my clearance arrived and I set about getting the five customary stamps from the DCA, ATC, Flight Planning, Radio office and Customs.

I was soon airborne out of Bombay for Calcutta.



These are some of my tracks across India, today is Bombay – Calcutta flight time today 5 hrs 35 min.

I arrive at Calcutta (Dum Dum) with time to spare and walk to the hotel which is just around the corner from the airport serving cold beer and a very good curry.

This airport is as chaotic as all Indian air ports when it comes to filing flight plans where five copies are required interleaved with 5 sheets of carbon paper.

These are pinned together with an explicit request to return the carbon sheets.

Over the years I had become adept at this system and would return the carbon as requested, but would leave a pre-printed copy, at each office, in case they couldn't read the original..

Being near the Tropic of Cancer where the temperature is near 30C ones palms are sweaty, I would flatten each sheet with a sweaty palm and return to the originator as instructed.

If you happen to be the following pilot, you will understand that is important to carry pre-printed copies of your route across India, because the greasy carbon, will not penetrate beyond the first page.

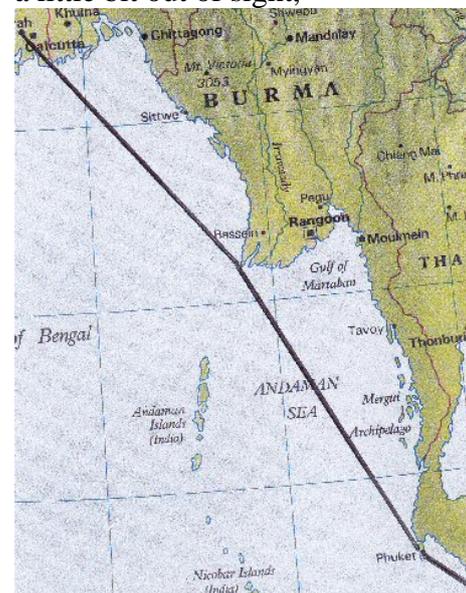
Wednesday: I arise very early and walk to the airport in the dark.

I board the aircraft and settle down for a pre-rest period, before start up and taxi request.



The sunrise out of Calcutta was awe-inspiring as are all sunrises when you are flying at this time of day. It starts as a curved slit of light on the horizon, which borders on hypnotic and then the sun pops up and the beautiful vista is suddenly gone.

It is daylight and the light becomes brighter as the Ganges Delta is well behind me, the coast of Burma is some distance to my left, at 100 nm a little bit out of sight,



This leg to Penang is 1,121 nm and will take me 9 hrs 50 mins and I should have about two hours of

daylight remaining for re-fuelling and getting to my hotel.



The famous Irrawaddy river flows down past Rangoon and into the sea just below me, not quite halfway to Penang.



After a long sea crossing I land at Penang with some low shadows, a very friendly place.

Thursday:

As I have been flying on GMT this last week coupled with the fact that we have been heading east and the earth has been rotating all this time I will effectively lose a day on tomorrow's leg towards Darwin as the days technically get shorter due to the earth's rotation.

I am up early at Penang climbing to altitude, today's flight will be 9hrs 35 mins, a little bit faster for a similar distance 1,129 nm.

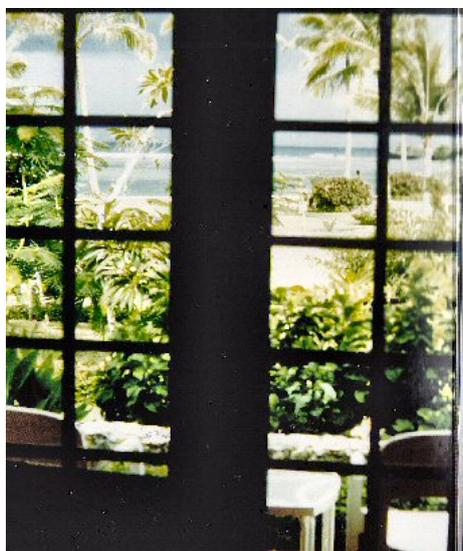


The Trinidad is a very comfortable aircraft for these long legs, and of course the pilots long legs.

After landing at Bali I taxi in as a Fokker F27 arrives which is carrying Rowley.



We are soon re-united and head for my favourite hotel Nusa Dua Beach Hotel situated in the grounds of an old temple with many statues.



This building has a roof but no walls except for the rooms in individual groups under the large roof, they do have a ceiling.



These rooms are excellent, all have a wonderful view.

This was a clever construction with a simple roof protecting the rooms below, no need for airconditioning.

The bars and eating areas are abundant and pleasant.



View from the open plan bar looking down to the restaurants.



Floral decorations in the bar area.

Rowley, having caught up with previous jet lag was able to keep up with me for a change and had a few drinks at the bar.

Saturday: We are up early, even Rowley is keen to get going as we are getting nearer Australia.

We arrive at the airport, the flight plan is in, I go to the toilet and proceed to the aircraft, Rowley is trailing behind. We get to the aircraft and I climb in asking Rowley if he is coming.

He says he is going to the toilet and wanders off, eventually he returns complaining there is a woman (cleaner) in the toilet and he can't go. I now have to get out of the aircraft and ask the woman to go outside. She giggles and leaves.

We get to the runway and line up, ahead of us a large Cu Nim has built up and Rowley becomes apprehensive and wants to abort, I explain we have 12 hrs 30 mins of fuel on board and we can fly around such weather with ease.

He was twitched !

I advance the throttle and we are airborne turning short of the CB it is soon far behind, with blue sky ahead, as far as we could see.

It isn't long before Rowley nods off into a deep slumber.



Approaching Darwin, it appears to be hidden beneath a big CB, Rowley gets twitchy again and I remind him we still have 5 1/2 hrs of fuel on board, we have only flown 7 hours since Bali.



The cloud dissipates and Darwin airport comes into view.

No sooner had we stopped in front of the Customs and Immigration Rowley tries to open the canopy and I had to restrain him because he didn't know about the spraying of an enclosed cockpit.

I pointed to the DV window and the officer gave me a can of disinfectant with which I fumigated the interior.

We may be Australian but we still have to respect the rules.

The immigration was quite surprised we were both Australian. No worries mate. !!

We head for a downtown boozier. Rowley could have his Bunderburg Rum that he kept telling me was the best in the world.

After a couple of these he went to bed, it was still early afternoon.

I take a swim in the pool and I had to wake Rowley to see if he was going to join me for dinner.

He dined and promptly went to bed again.

I entertained myself at the bar.

Saturday: Rowley is up early.



We are soon airborne taking a couple of pictures as we leave Darwin, heading inland to Mt Isa.

It isn't long before we are confronted with a very strong headwind of 75 knots which could add considerable time to our leg to Mt Isa. After 1/2 an hour the wind dissipates which is a relief.



The Northern Territory is a large area and there are thousands of ant hills which stand about six feet high. It would be almost impossible to land here without hitting one, they will collapse in a cloud of dust, but would seriously damage the aircraft.



Eventually we arrive at Mt Isa after 6 hrs 10 mins.



We re-fuel and head to town for our hotel.

Mt Isa is a mining town situated in a bowl with a chimney that sticks up 1,500 ft a.m.s.l.



I took this dramatic picture late in the afternoon, showing the large chimney at Mt Isa.

Sunday: The final day, we leave Mt Isa for Archerfield.

The flight is uneventful after 6 hrs 30 mins we can see Archerfield in the distance and Rowley asks if he can taxi in after landing.



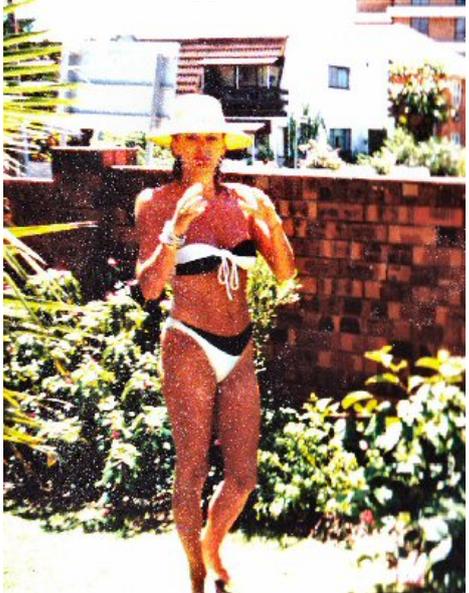
Archer field ahead.



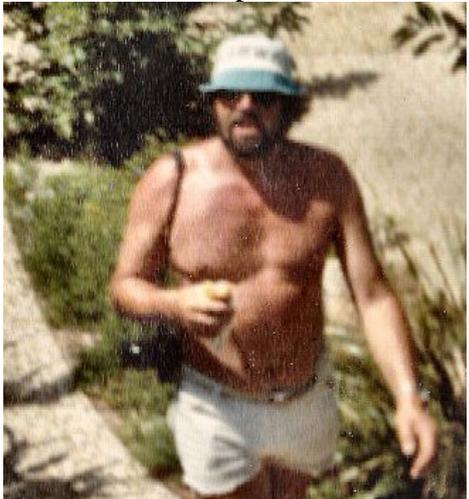
Rowley taxis up to the front of the hangar, a small crowd is waiting and it isn't long before Rowley is relaying stories of all the places he has seen.

Not mentioning how many hours he slept, nor the fact that he jumped ship in Bombay for 4 days.

I listened quietly as I sip a beer!
I will stay at Archerfield for two days before driving down to Surfers Paradise to see Susy Scrivner ex Biggin Hill-ite.



Surfers Paradise where they say the weather is good today, but tomorrow will be perfect.



JB the editor soaking up the sunshine at Surfers Paradise



Susy at Grays Wharf, a shopping centre, leisure area on the inlet at Surfers.



The board walk area was well presented, the bar was inside the building and very busy.

Magic Mountain fun park 1984 at Surfers Paradise, with cable car ride and parachute jump giving a very good view of the area when winched to the top of the tower.



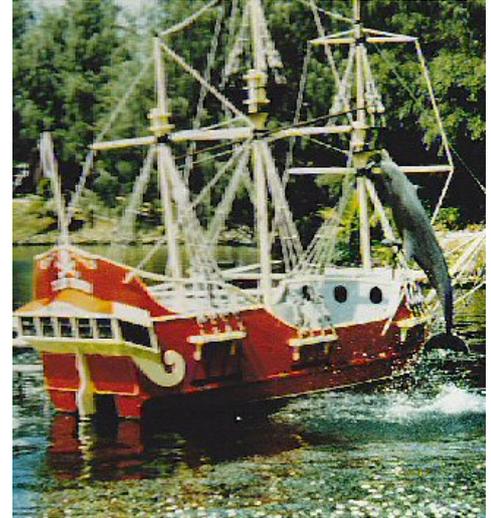
Magic Mountain fun park 1984 at Surfers Paradise, with cable car ride and parachute jump giving a very good view of the area.



The barrel roll ride was close to the ground, very effective.



Ideal beautiful fun park with plenty of sunshine and very clean.



A dolphin leaps for a handout from its keeper high up the mast.

The editor returned to Surfers in 1992 and this fun park was all gone it had been re-located out of town and much larger, costing \$21 to enter – rides were free.



A replica Mississippi River Boat at Surfers Paradise gives daily pleasure trips for tourists.

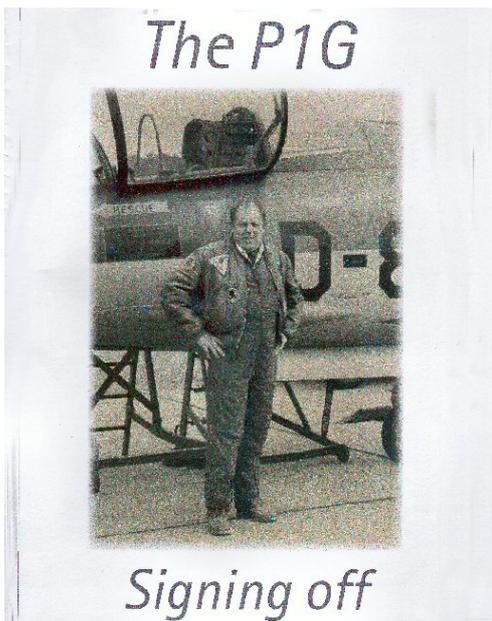


April 1991 I return to Surfers with my wife step-daughter Briony who

spotted these two young boys with a Rock Python snake.



Briony returned to Surfers Paradise five years later and found this much larger Rock Python. Could this be the same snake. ??



Roy was never the first one to leave a party. He has the last word as always, finally 'signed off'.

TWO WELL KNOWN ICONS OF BIGGIN HILL DIE



Janet Hoare a much loved character, air traffic controller at Biggin Hill for many years and several years at Fair Oaks, chatting to Captain David Quirk at the last Biggin Hill Reunion. Janet died 1st March 2014.



Roy Sanders, (The Pig) as he was affectionately known, with Clare, at the last Biggin Hill Reunion in 2003. Roy died 26th March 2014. Pig was a perpetual entertainer at weekends at Biggin Hill.