



BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT BUGLE

News from our Airport at Biggin Hill - established 2005



CLUB AND AIRPORT NEWS

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KING BILLY STORY TIME:



During a 'Dream Time Walkabout' near the Kalgoolie open cut mines of Western Australia, King Billy came across his friend Morton who was stood on the very edge of one of these huge holes.

Hey Morton he shouts...! Don't jump, "I aint gonna jump", Morton shouts back back. I am wondering how deep this hole is?

Chuck a rock down, says King Billy. Morton finds a rock and launches it down the hole.

"Did ya hear anything" Morton says to King Billy.

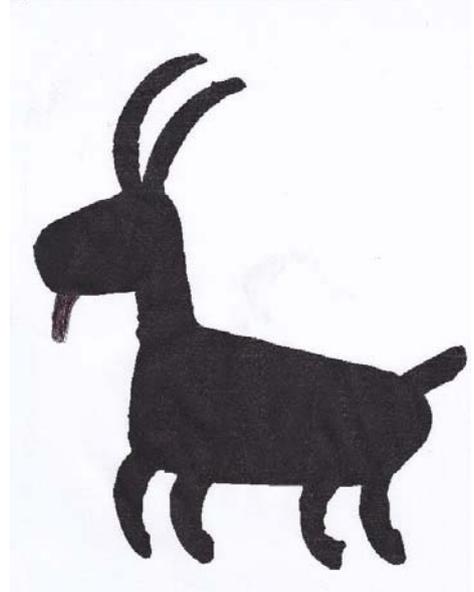
"Nuthin", says King Billy, we need something bigger.- says King Billy. Moreton wanders off into the long grass and shouts back to King Billy. Gives us a hand will ya..!

This oughta do it, says Morton as he points to a huge railway sleeper. Between them they manage to end over end this very heavy railway sleeper to the edge of the hole and push over the edge.

This is followed by silence except for a loud ruffling sound coming from the long grass behind them.

King Billy looks around, and sees a huge goat with big horns, bulging

eyes, with a long beard charging straight toward them at high speed.



Quick as flash King Billy pushes Morton to one side and jumps back himself as the goat goes between them leaping down the hole.

They pick themselves up, brushing the dust off their clothes, still shaking from this recent ordeal, another black fella come along switching a stick as he walks through the long grass and asks King Billy and Morton if they had seen a goat nearby.

What..! the one that just tried to kill us?

Na, this fella says, wouldn't be mine, he was real tame.

I left him tied to a railway sleeper somewhere around here.

BIGGIN HILL TO CAPETOWN

Laurie (Harry) Harris's story continues: from issue - 101.....! From the American oil base of Es Sidr! Closing down both engines

breathed an enormous sigh of relief and we all disembarked.



Having offered my apologies and explained the reason for our unannounced intrusion into their domain, the American Crew Chief who came to the scene shortly after told us that we were most welcome. No doubt the sight of a group of western females in an otherwise male-dominated environment was quite an event for him! He assured us that his team would give the engine a thorough check over and sort out the problem, and in the meantime he suggested we stayed the night as it was getting quite late. We gratefully accepted his kind offer and were led to a row of billets where they soon fixed us up with rooms apiece, each fully equipped with a shower and toilet.

My first concern was to try and contact either Tripoli or Benghazi through the Es Sidr Base's long-range HF radio in order to cancel the Mayday distress call I had transmitted and to let everyone know we had landed safely... No luck! There was no response to our continuous calls but the operator assured me he would keep on trying anyway.

After a shower and a clean-up we

were escorted to their mess hall for a hearty, sumptuous feast, as only the Americans know how to lay on. Soon after taking our fill, the Crew Chief came in and assured us that the errant engine was now running okay again. The fault apparently lay in the ignition system. They had cleaned all the spark plugs; reset the contact points on both magnetos; replaced some of the suspect harness leads; and given the engine a full run-up, passing it out as fully serviceable again. They then chocked the wheels and tied her down for the night for us

December 16th 1963... Next morning we were up bright and early with the sunrise and were once again ushered into the mess hall for a good hearty breakfast – the best we'd had since leaving the UK! The Americans can be the essence of hospitality and kindness to guests and it was greatly appreciated by us all. Not a cent would they take for their services either, so after lots of hand-shaking and pouring out our sincere and heart-felt thanks, we bade them farewell and took off again from Es Sidr for Benghazi which we reached, without incident, one and a half hours later. The base at Es Sidr had been unable to contact anyone the whole time we were there and I conjured up gloomy visions of fleets of rescue planes searching the area for any trace of us, but not so! Immediately after disembarking on arrival I tore straight up to the Control Tower and began offering my explanations, expecting the worst. They didn't even know who we were; had not received any flight plan from Tripoli the day before, and in fact were totally disinterested. Oh well, that's the Libyans for you... At least I was off the hook!

My friend Brian Pocock, the co-owner of Libyan Aviation that I had met the previous year when I ferried the Auster out, had arranged for his engineers to do a check on

the aircraft whilst he took us off in his car for a meal. By the time we returned, the check was complete so we decided to press-on to Mersah Matruh near the Libyan/Egyptian border, the scene of many fierce battles during the previous desert war between the Allies and the Axis powers in WW2.

We saw much evidence of this with all the abandoned and burnt-out tanks and lorries laying scattered around in the arid wastes.

A quick refuelling stop cum Customs and Immigration clearance at Mersah Matruh and we were off again on our next leg to Cairo. It was getting late in the day and this would be my first night flight in the Rapide, but I was feeling a lot more confident by now. Don was obviously also happy at this decision to make up for lost time.

We flew along the Egyptian coast to the Nile Delta at Rosetta Beacon, the same place where the famous Rosetta Stone in the British Museum was discovered. This was the point where the mighty River Nile spilled out into the Mediterranean after its long and winding path through the ancient historical lands. Turning right at Rosetta Beacon, we would now be flying southwards all the way to the end of Africa, with our first port of call being Cairo. Little did I realise it then that we would be following this mighty river, the longest in the world at 4,184 miles from source to delta, spanning half the length of Africa, for the next four days.

The ADF began picking up Cairo Airport beacon and my spirits were high. The night flight would put us nicely back on schedule after our enforced stop in the Libyan desert. Each of the girls in turn came and sat alongside me on the step to see the lights on either bank of the Nile. Cairo eventually hove into sight and with a little guidance from the controllers I saw the airport and landed. Everything by

now was going more or less according to plan and we were feeling happy with ourselves.

Customs and Immigration were more thorough than we'd expected but we took it all in our stride, despite our general fatigue and desiring only to get to the hotel and relax. They were more than interested though to know our final destination. Apartheid had become a big issue with the Africans by now, and Egyptians in particular, so we dare not tell them we were going to South Africa otherwise our journey would have surely been terminated there and then.

Having previously anticipated this we planned to say that our final destination was East Africa instead. Then having arrived in East Africa we would then tell them that we'd changed our minds and decided to go to Southern Rhodesia (modern day Zimbabwe) which although being a British Colony still, would have been acceptable. We hoped by this ploy to avert any true suspicion of our true destination. Finally, having arrived in Southern Rhodesia we would declare our true intentions having nothing further to fear. I dare not even think about coming back on the return flight along the same route. Sufficient that we get there in one piece and I would worry about those problems later!

Don had previously made bookings for us by telegram at a small hotel in Cairo. Our taxi duly disgorged us there after we had finally managed to get free of the frustrating airport officialdom and refuelled ready for the next day's flight. This had taken a lot longer than anticipated with the unco-operative Egyptian Customs and Immigration so by the time we finally arrived at the hotel we were exhausted, with Jillie the youngest letting us know in no uncertain manner that it was way past her bedtime. Had I known then what I know now, I am quite sure our progress through officialdom would have been a lot smoother

had we 'greased a few palms' so to speak!

Having paid off the taxi, and saw him drive off, we fronted up to reception to sign in, only to be told that unfortunately they had no record of our booking and claimed that there were no rooms available anyway – in true Arab style! Don rightly demanded to see the Manager. Out to the front desk came this fat balding little Egyptian gentleman. We explained the situation and after studying the copy of our cable and the hotel's register he tut-tutted awhile, shaking his head, then apologising profusely he regretted that there were still no rooms available. It was at that point that Don's patience snapped! He took him by the collar and started patting him on his bald pate saying "*Are you sure that you have no rooms available?*"

At that point, as the obese little Egyptian's bulging eyes were opening and closing in concert with Don's unceasing and rather heavy pats on his bald head, he suddenly remembered that he did have two rooms available after all. I followed the bell-boy upstairs to my single room whilst the others went to theirs.

17 December 1963... Eight more days to Christmas Day, the whole continent of Africa to traverse from the top to bottom in our tiny wooden and canvas aircraft. More nausea on our departure from Cairo Airport but eventually we were on our way again southwards, following approximately the course of the River Nile. It was now getting increasingly more difficult to get the children started in the mornings, as by this time the boredom of the long flying hours in the stuffy atmosphere of our tiny aircraft was really getting to them. They would have dearly loved to have seen the sights of Cairo, the museum with all the mummies, the pyramids and other historical

relics, but there simply wasn't time.

The Pyramids came into sight on our right; as we passed by the girls had a good view which cheered them up a little. They were a bit disappointed though at their smallness which, like most well-known structures, appear enormous when viewed from ground level close up but somewhat small when viewed from up in the sky. Considering that the largest one, the great Cheops Pyramid, comprised nearly eight million tons of stone stacked forty stories high, they looked quite insignificant from our tiny aircraft.



G-ALGC flying over the Pyramids



The Temples of Karnak, Luxor.

The longest river in the world wound its way through the endless desert. Its course could be clearly seen for miles ahead due to the green strip of vegetation stretching for about half-a-mile or so on either side, then petering out into the endless sand of the desert. 'Egypt is the Nile and the Nile is Egypt' so they say, and I can well believe it. Without her life-giving waters Egypt would never have existed as a nation of repute.

Our next stop was to be Luxor with nothing much to see but featureless desert beneath us stretching in all directions. I chose to fly reasonably high, around 5,000 feet, to get into cooler air and out of the more turbulent hot ground layers, mainly for the comfort of Anne and the children. It would also afford me a better view for map reading and of course give better radio reception; not that it helped very much because most of the time we were out of radio range anyway.

The flight to Luxor was uneventful and on arrival there we decided to take a short break. The next leg wasn't too long and as that was as far as we could make in one day we chose to take the children off to have a quick look at the ancient Egyptian monuments at Karnak. It was getting pretty hot by now and we were all glad of a cool drink on the way. As the new Aswan High Dam was slowly flooding the upper Nile, forming what was later to become Lake Nasser, it would probably be our last chance to see the wonders of bygone ages before they were swallowed up, or moved to a higher site, which they eventually were.

Within a couple of hours we were on our way again. Our next stopping place was to be Wadi Halfa in the Sudan on its border with Egypt. I pointed out the



Valley of the Kings to the girls as we flew on passed (as detailed by the topographic map spread across my knee), still following the Nile. I thought that maybe it wouldn't do any harm to fly a little bit lower along the water for a while to break the monotony and give everyone a better view.

With the flooding caused by the big dam spreading the waters of the Nile on either side, the flow was very much reduced of course. This made low-flying rather difficult because with the sluggish water movement, and the relentless sun reflecting off the surface, judging height became a problem, so I eased the nose gently up to about fifty feet or so to be on the safe side. The natives on the river banks tending their crude but effective irrigation apparatus waved to us as we sped by, with the girls waving furiously back at them...

As the afternoon wore on into evening, the sky colours changed from blue through golden to red and twilight rapidly descended upon us. The course of the Nile was easy to follow as it grew dark because it became the black void in between parallel rows of lights on the banks. However, because of a large detour of the Nile swinging to the left before it swung back again, I decided as time was getting on a bit to take a short cut in a straight line across the desert towards Wadi Halfa. It soon became pitch black with no horizon and nothing apart from a myriad of stars above to be seen. I became a bit concerned at this point because if we strayed off course and missed Wadi Halfa in the dark we would be in real trouble. I had no desire to try and attempt a night-landing without any idea what the terrain was like beneath me!

Somewhere along this leg of the route we passed the Tropic of Cancer at 23½ degrees North thereby entering the tropical regions. We droned on through the darkness and I frantically searched the ADF dial trying to pick up the Wadi Halfa beacon hoping and praying that they'd left it on like we had previously arranged. At long last through the static I heard the sound of 'WH' in Morse. As we drew closer the ADF needle began to home onto the airfield. Finally the lights of Wadi Halfa appeared and after circling the

airfield a couple of times to make sure, being unable to raise them on the radio, I came in to land on the runway which they had kindly lit-up by *gooseneck* paraffin flares especially for our benefit, and so another stage of our journey ended.

We spent that night in the quaint old Nile Hotel where apparently the Empire Flying Boat crews used to stop at also in days gone by. It was a delightful scene by the river and sipping a cool beer sitting on wicker chairs looking at the twinkling lights along the river, gave me a heart-warming and satisfied feeling.

We went for a short stroll through the small town before dinner and coming upon the open market place we saw rows of Muslims kneeling down in prayer with their heads to the ground; a sight that I had never witnessed before but stood fascinated at such devotion to their religion.

18 December 1963... Next stop was Khartoum. This was going to be a long leg across the Nubian Desert. And so we waved goodbye to Wadi Halfa and were probably among the last of tourist-type visitors there, as I later understood that not long afterwards it was abandoned to the ever flooding waters of the Nile as the Aswan Dam's water rose higher each day.

An earlier than normal start was made because of the extra distance planned for the day. Nearly four hours later we landed at Khartoum, with little to see on the way except endless desert, sand and rocks with occasional glimpses of the Nile, crossing it on two occasions as it took a wide swing to the left and back again. Eventually Khartoum appeared through the heat haze and the Controller cleared us for a straight-in landing. They parked us right in front of the terminal building and whilst Don took care of the paperwork & landing fees, I attended to the refuelling. By now our pre-arranged fuel was supplied in square sealed cans which we

poured through a chamois leather filter into the fuel tanks, one behind each engine; a long and tedious process, but necessary to ensure against any impurities or water contaminating the fuel system. Consequently we had a lot of empty cans sitting on the wings as we emptied them.

They had parked us right behind a DC3 of Sudan Airways which I wasn't very happy about at the time, and lo-and-behold, just as I had feared, the pilot (or possibly an engineer) of the DC3 started his engines and then stupidly proceeded to do a run-up on each one in turn. The empty petrol cans were blown off the wings of the Rapide and across the tarmac as the idiot opened-up his throttles for what seemed to be a full-power run-up. The Rapide started rocking violently in the wake of its slipstream. Our wheels were chocked of course but even so it was rocking so violently in the propeller blast I feared that at any second it would be blown on its wing-tip and severely damaged. I ran around to the front of the DC3 and waved frantically to try and catch the occupant's attention but to no avail. His head was stuck well and truly down looking at his instruments no doubt. At last he throttled back and started taxiing off with me shaking my fist at him. He didn't even notice me! I went up to the control tower and complained bitterly about the moron but they weren't very interested. On arrival back in UK much later I wrote a strong letter to the Chief Pilot of Sudan Airways, informing him about the incident which had nearly wrecked our aircraft, but he never even had the courtesy to reply.

The coolness of the air-conditioned terminal building's restaurant after the searing heat on the burning tarmac outside, plus the recent incident which elevated my blood temperature a degree or two, was most welcome. A good meal and more iced drink than Don

settled the bill and before long we were on our way again.

The next leg was not so long this time; only about an hour and a half I estimated. We had been recommended to break our journey at a small crop-spraying strip called Kosti by the White Nile, and spend the night at the Government rest house. Going up-river the Nile divides in two at Khartoum; the Blue Nile veers off sharply to the left up to its source at Lake Tana in Ethiopia, whilst the longer White Nile continues southwards. We would now be following the White Nile from thereon, all the way to Lake Victoria, Khartoum being roughly halfway from its source to the delta. We kept it in sight most of the way southwards as it zigzagged left and right across our track. Finally, as our estimated time of arrival approached, I converged onto the river and flew along it. I was looking out for a long railway bridge crossing the White Nile which would indicate where the small settlement would be close-by. It also had a radio beacon and I soon picked up the call-sign and began to home onto it. The bridge came into view some distance away and as I approached, the ADF needle swung around and pointed behind me indicating my passage overhead, so I went into a left-hand bank to circle and look for the airstrip which had so far eluded me. I had virtually no route information about the place and wasn't even sure what I was actually looking for! I could see the small settlement with a few palm trees and lots of track marks, but nothing that remotely resembled an airstrip.

Across the river though, I glimpsed a long runway with nothing else around it. I came to the conclusion that obviously the info I had been given must have been wrong.

Convinced that this was the strip I was supposed to be landing at, I headed off to circuit the runway

and having satisfied myself that it was safe, came in and landed.

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Taxiing-in to a small dispersal area off the side of the runway I fetched the Rapide to a standstill and shut-down. There was nobody in sight and everywhere was deserted! Whilst we were pondering what to do next, a small Piper Tri-pacer flew overhead and landed. The pilot came over to us and told me that I had landed at the wrong strip. The correct one was on the other side of the river! The one we had landed at was an old disused wartime strip. I was to learn later that its name was Rabak. The Tri-pacer pilot said that that he could take a couple of our passengers to lighten our load, suggesting that I follow him with the Rapide to the correct strip. We took off again and within a couple of minutes he landed ahead of me on a mass of wheel tracks I'd seen next to the village previously. So this was the so-called strip I'd been searching for? The Tri-pacer pilot had warned me it was a bit short and that I was to watch out for the drainage ditch at the threshold which was hidden in the long grass. It didn't sound a too inviting approach. Noticing the ditch coming up I eased her gently over it, as slow as I dared, and chopped the power. She touched down on the main wheels right at the beginning of the strip but it seemed ages before the tail started to sink down. By now I was also braking as hard as I dared to avoid lifting the tail up again. The wooden shacks at the end of the strip were looming up fast. At this point I was going too slow to attempt a go-around but too fast to pull up (stop) – the typical pilot's dilemma! I thought "Oh my God! This is where it all ends".

As the end of the airstrip came rushing up to me, realising by now

that I had no hope of pulling-up in time, I slammed on the left brake and deliberately slewed the Rapide ninety degrees to the left to avoid smashing headlong into the wooden shacks ahead. Miraculously she did the most graceful ground-loop you've ever witnessed and then completed a relatively slow-motion 360 degree turn coming gently to a standstill right at the edge of the intended parking area. Closing my eyes for a few seconds, sending a prayer of thanks heavenwards, I shut the engines down and breathed a huge sigh of relief with heart pounding away nineteen to the dozen.. On climbing out I was heartily congratulated by a group of crop-spraying pilots who witnessed my arrival, obviously of the erroneous opinion that the 360° turn had been a deliberately planned manoeuvre on my part – how wrong they were! Wreathed in sweat, with everyone else except me totally oblivious of the near-disaster I'd just avoided by the skin of my teeth, I meekly followed them to the small Government Rest House where we were to spend our night stop, putting on a brave face but inwardly still shaking from the ordeal.

Our stay in the Rest House went well and we were regally entertained by the cotton crop-spraying pilots. More than just a few beers were downed by us all that night. I dare not even contemplate then what the short take-off would have in store for me on the morrow!

19 December 1963... Five days left before Christmas – would we make it in time? My first problem though was getting the Rapide out of Kosti. So after saying farewell to everyone we climbed aboard for the next leg of our flight to Malakal, further up the White Nile. I started up and taxied out to the far end of the strip, utilising every last inch of ground available. A quick magneto check then holding her

hard on the brakes with some flap down to give extra lift, I gave her full throttle against the brakes and when I deemed the engines were giving every bit of power they could muster, I released them and let her go. It seemed an eternity before the tail began rising into the flying attitude meanwhile the end of the strip, with wooden shacks and the date palms, loomed ever closer. Heaving back on the control column at the last second we roared overhead the obstructions and I just caught a sidelong glance at the whole village who had either turned up to wave us goodbye; or to witness the impending disaster we had narrowly avoided. With another huge sigh of relief I set course for Malakal which was our next refuelling stop in the Sudan where we landed some two hours later after an uneventful flight in good weather conditions.

The airfield lay on the eastern bank of the Nile and at right angles to it, just north of the town itself. There was little to recommend Malakal as a tourist attraction. A rather run-down and grubby sort of place but at least it had a bit of greenery around. Having fuelled-up we were glad to be on our way again to our next port of call Juba, which was to be our final stopping place in the Sudan; also situated on the Nile but with very little to catch our interest except the ever-meandering river but with many more trees and patches of grassland now. The youngest one Jillie aged five was getting increasingly restless and kept throwing tantrums. I felt sorry for them, especially Anne who bore the brunt of looking after them, but there was little I could do to relieve their boredom as my hands were somewhat full! It seemed ages before Juba appeared in the distance and we were rather glad when we finally touched down after the three-hour flight. Once again, nothing much to see of interest but I was beginning to notice the distinct change of

scenery to a pampas-type vegetation. It signalled that at last we were now getting ever closer to the equator and the true jungle environment of Africa.

We didn't waste any time at Juba as we still had a long leg to fly before reaching our final destination for the day, Entebbe in Uganda. Immediately we had completed the refuelling, again from five-gallon drums through a chamois leather, we obtained Immigration and Customs clearance, then had our passports stamped, and got under way again.

The White Nile from here on meandered lazily through a massive swampy grassland called 'The Sud' and gradually the flat terrain began to give way to a few low hills. The river then disappeared from view as its route moved eastwards. Puffy white 'fair-weather cumulus' clouds began to appear on the horizon but fortunately the weather remained predominantly good which was a relief. Green hills dominated the scene everywhere but I was confident that we were still holding our course and continued droning on southwards with my two Gypsy Queens purring comfortably alongside me.

At last Lake Victoria came into view and soon afterwards the long runway of Entebbe lay ahead, almost exactly on the equator. After landing and taxiing in to the spot the Controller indicated, we were immediately descended upon by grim-looking Customs officials. They searched the aircraft from end to end, going through our luggage with a fine tooth comb. It seems they were looking for smuggled arms or something. This was long before the age of general drug abuse so it couldn't have been that they were searching for! Fortunately Don's travellers cheques, hidden in various niches around the aircraft, seemed to have eluded them.

Once we had cleared all the paperwork; passports stamped and

other formalities taken care of, Anne took the three children off to the terminal building whilst Don went to the tower to pay the landing and parking fees etc. I took care of the refuelling and then followed Don to file the following day's flight plan and get all the latest information about the next leg. We took a taxi to the lovely old Lake Victoria hotel with its setting in lush tropical greenery and fragrant Frangipani and Bougainvillea abounding in the luxurious gardens, the likes of which I had never seen before.

There out beyond the lush greenery lay the vast Lake Victoria, the source of the White Nile whose course we had been following since leaving Khartoum. At last we had reached the headwaters of the world's longest river, all the way from the far off blue Mediterranean down to the Equator. It seemed ages since we first sighted the mighty river only four days ago. From now on we would be moving into the Southern Hemisphere's Summer. The cold bleak English Winter weather seemed so remote now.

That evening in the bar, Don and I had long conversations with some of the colonial-type gentlemen who regaled us with tales of life in the tropics under former British rule. Our stay at the 'Lake Vic', as it was colloquially known by the East African Airways crews, was most cordial. Despite the increased humidity Anne and the girls enjoyed the tropical atmosphere immensely after the rigours of the featureless dry desert we'd been though in the last few days, even if the girls were a little bewildered by the black African Negro world they now found themselves in!

We take break on this journey across Africa in a DH 84 Rapide. Harry's epic story will continue in the September issue of the Bugle.....!

We pause for an important party...!!

THE BUGLE'S EDITOR IS 80



Whilst JB is not sure where all his years have gone, it is apparent that life goes on as Isabella Spanyol wishes him a Happy Birthday.

A surprise party was arranged by Briony Truman.

The venue was at the Westerham Football Club premises on Saturday 13th July 2013.

Many larger than life characters attended this fabulous event, the first being Capt Martin Emery with his throw away camera aimed at JB



Followed by his partner, Janet Stockes. Martin swears by these cameras and tells a wonderful story with photo evidence of when two engines fell off the starboard wing of their Boeing 707 at night. Wow!

THE BIGGEST SURPRISE ..!



JB was reunited with brother Barry and sister Elaine at a secret lunch rendezvous held in a pub at West Wickham (the day before) all arranged by Briony his step-daughter. It was quite an effort for everyone to maintain the secrecy.



Derek Clauson and John Bryan were both in Suez in 1956 at different ends, they added.

Their missions were so secret that they never knew about each other until they met some 45 years later over a drink, even then they treated each other with suspicious respect.



Michael Dunkerly and JB have

shared many adventures, both in the air and over the oceans. JB is a dry-land sailor primarily as an adviser for sea going persons, such as Michael, transmitting weather data and wave heights.

Michael has been sunk twice whilst on the high seas.

JB adds it was nothing to do with any advice he may have proffered as a result. He also remarked that he wouldn't put to sea in anything less than the 'Titanic'.....!!!



Two more old soaks said they had no idea that JB was having a party, they only came for the beer and preferred to talk to someone sensible with no experience in aviation.



Tony Westbrook a quiet respected Radio Technician – Over & Out..!!



Pamela Elles, Kay Elliott, Barry Bryan, Elaine Michaelis (nee Bryan) and Ian Branch enjoying a drink at JB's 80th on 13th July 2013.

grasp the fact that each time he tied a balloon off and put it down, they were floating to the ceiling. We didn't see him serve any drinks, but he did stay with JB to the bitter end. They were the last to leave the party.



Sue and John Symes with Capt Quirk enjoying the afternoon incl: Martin Emery, Paul Shires and Barbara Barrow.



Michael Dunkerly, Patricia Ellson, JB, and Briony, his step daughter the organiser, of this auspicious occasion.



Patrick Tricker resplendent in his bar keep outfit. He was one of the first to arrive, helping inflate the balloons with helium and didn't



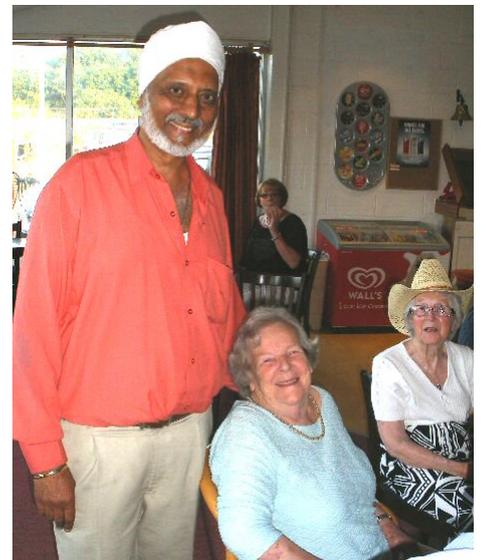
Airfield drinking buddies, Gary Merchant, Gary Duncan, Chris Bond and Alan Taylor, guaranteed to attend any party.



These two, Ray and Tony came for the space to have a quiet drink.



Some tend to drink alone, Bradley sank a few during the day and really enjoyed himself.



Singh Bamhra, Pamela Elles and Kay Elliott.



Justin, JB, Alan Humphries, Martin and Janet, go back many years.



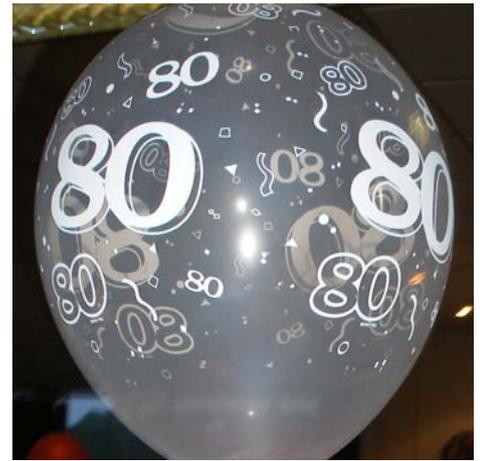
Gary, Chris, Joanna, Jan & John High enjoying the sunshine.



A final gathering of the Bryan's at home in Biggin Hill. Briony had done a wonderful job of keeping this reunion a very well kept secret as we hadn't seen each other for many years – well done..!



Christina Willis samples the food supplied by 'Doorstepscatering' of Westerham Hill.



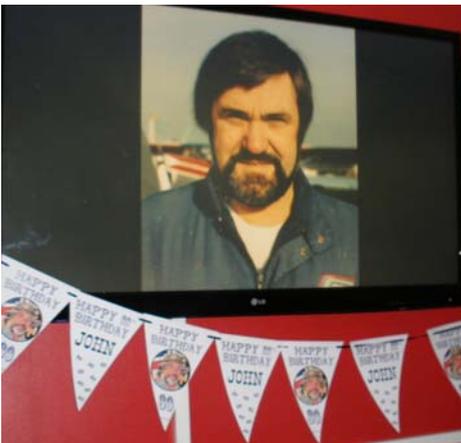
A future pilot..! or a model?



Janet Stokes, Chris and Ann Bunch with Christine Bryan.



Come on Grandad..!
You have to cut the cake now before you forget why you are here I have two witnesses ready..!!!



A TV screen featured many old pictures of JB in his younger days.



Isabella Mai – stayed up late.

EDITORS FINAL NOTE:

JB wishes to thank all his friends for supporting this party and for the high attendance. Especially, the efforts of my step daughter for all the arrangements and a surprise reunion of my brother and sister who had come from Australia for my 80th.

A truly wonderful effort by all.