



BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT BUGLE

News from our Airport at Biggin Hill - established 2005



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TRINIDAD GT EXPERIENCE

This aircraft has to be experienced on a very long flight for its interior comfort the front seats are fully adjustable, extremely comfortable over a long period of time.

There is also a good storage space forward of these seats.

A small cardboard box can be utilised for this area, being shaped to fit, can store camera / binoculars etc, easily reached, secure storage.

Getting into these aircraft is so easy with its gull wing doors. Step onto the wing, turn and face the wingtip (left or right) and step in backwards onto the floor with one foot then the other foot and simply sit down.

You see people trying to get in with one leg and sitting down with the exterior leg protruding high in the air – very awkward.

The original instrument panel for the TB series was designed by a French car manufacturer. This was a very good idea as all the instruments are in a familiar place.

Circuit breakers are accessible with ease.

The Aternate Air control and the Undercarriage Emergency release, are left of the central consul, easy to reach and simple to operate.

The power unit of this aircraft is a 250HP Lycoming engine with 2 blade variable pitch propeller and



retractable undercarriage.

I first became acquainted with this aircraft on the 4th August 2001 at EADS Socata division at Tarbes for delivery to a customer based at Gloster Airport, England.

My next relationship with this aircraft would be two years later for a ferry flight to Japan.

I met the new owner, Mr Mori from Tokyo who visited Air Touring of Biggin Hill.

He agreed to my estimates for the flight, and then asked if I could deliver it next week...!

I explained it didn't quite work like that. There was the matter of flight clearances and a ferry tank (200ltr) estimated departure date would be three weeks and take seven days.

Whilst the 'flight clearances' were forthcoming, the fitting of a ferry tank was not going so well, due mainly to new JAR regulations.

Although this aircraft has very good range, a ferry tank means it is possible to remain aloft for most of

The day thereby avoiding political boundaries and time wasting delays



Without a ferry tank the Trinidad has very good range, and is capable

of making this journey on standard fuel tanks, it means also inevitable delays associated with these stops, plus extra paperwork and fees.

JOURNEY TO JAPAN DAY 1

Following some confusion by the Japanese Insurance company over the difference between EST and UTC I finally got airborne out of Biggin on the 15th September 2003, for Cannes (Mandelieu) for my first fuel stop.



It was a beautiful day for flying as we pass the Central Massif.



The magnificent Azure Blue of the Riviera finally comes into view.



Parked on the fuel ramp at Cannes, which is neat, tidy and organised. From here we will depart for Kerkyra at Corfu.

These two legs today are important to be able to calculate the fuel burn accurately for the remainder of this journey at FL130.

This appeared to be 39.12 ltr per hr which was excellent giving an absolute endurance of 8hrs 20min to dry tanks.

Generally the TB20 has a good fuel

endurance of 7hrs 10 min and a range of 1100nm with careful flying this can be increased to 1208nm by flying at the best density altitude giving a 62% power setting (full throttle) with fuel flow adjustment at FL130.

FL130 to FL140 for the normally aspirated engine of the TB20 is the best height for long journeys.

OAT of +10c +15c at these levels will affect performance. Weight and balance changes, should be calculated to gain the best performance throughout the flight, bearing in mind the CoG balance of the fuel tank during this time, most other disposables can be adjusted to compensate for the fuel imbalance.

Another small but significant gain in range can be achieved by allowing the aircraft to gain height by rising air currents and when this decreases lower the nose and gain speed (5kts) for the equivalent time of the free ascent.

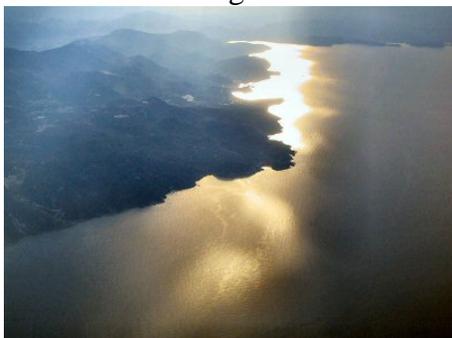
A mile gained can be the equivalent of those valuable seconds required on final approach for a landing, whether it is a runway or a forced landing.

You have now gained the knowledge of maximum endurance but not the ultimate range because I have not mentioned the changing ground speeds which will affect the actual range.

Ahh..! Just when everything was going swimmingly.....

JOURNEY TO JAPAN: DAY 2

It was quite dark as I walked to Kerkyra this particular morning, the flight plan is filed and we are airborne following the sunrise.



along the rugged Greek Coastline is always quite dramatic.

Halfway along this leg to Larnaca in Cyprus a call comes from Athena Control saying we have no clearance to land at Larnaca.

This is where the mobile phone comes in handy for the ferry pilot.

I immediately phone my handling agent at Gatwick, within minutes all is resolved, and the flight continues.

A couple of hours later the island of Cyprus appears.



Long finals to runway 22 at Larnaca with a visible crosswind.



This leg from Kerkyra was only 4hrs 35min meaning arrival at Cyprus in time for lunch with the afternoon for relaxing.

Meanwhile I came across this unusual picture at my hotel in Larnaca.



JOURNEY TO JAPAN DAY 3



Sunrise departure from Larnaca we head east climbing to cruising level.



Crossing the mountains of Lebanon we head south to Jordan and Queen Alia International airport below.



After landing and taxiing in, a very nice man came out and asked what I wanted? I replied 'Avgas 100LL'

I'm sorry Sir, we don't have any fuel here you will have to fly up to Amman (Marka).

Having paid a landing fee he pointed out where it was on the map, 30 miles back to the North.



This airfield is 2,395ft a.m.s.l the temperature was 30c. They were very helpful, refiling my

fightplan and I left for Kuwait. Leaving Jordan territory we were asked to climb to FL150, I agreed to try but advised it may not be possible to make this level with the OAT+12c and the density altitude. The aircraft couldn't maintain this level and settled at FL140.

The Iraqi war had just ended and there was a large dog-leg across the north of Saudi Arabia.

The controller called me and said I could route direct to Kuwait, saving me 82nm as there was no further military activity close to Iraqi border. I thanked him very much and requested decent to FL130.

The rest of the flight was flown in a very thick desert haze and saw nothing until short finals at Kuwait. Total flying today 7hrs 05min and to add insult to injury, the fuel truck at Kuwait has a broken fuel pump..!!

The fuel man promised it would be repaired during the night and be ready by sunrise tomorrow.

JOURNEY TO JAPAN DAY 4

Today is Thursday and tonight and tomorrow will be spent in Dubai for a party with my friends and a service on the aircraft.

This leg was only 3hrs 40min with atrocious haze for the whole of the flight.



After landing at Dubai I taxied to the Aerogulf hangar where the aircraft would be serviced and washed.

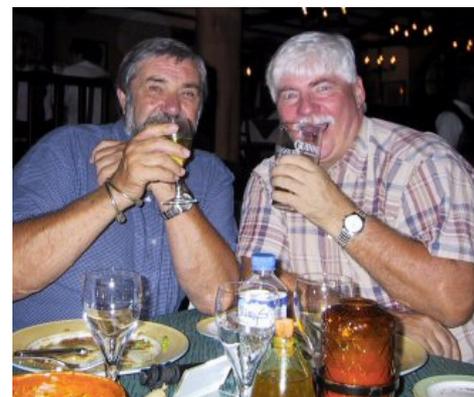
I headed across the road to the Bustan Hotel and the Biggles Bar.

The old terminal at Dubai has been turned into a very large Control Centre, very impressive.

I hadn't been to Dubai for a few years and the changes had to be seen to be believed.



When I lived in Dubai our flat was in the middle of the desert, today it is totally surrounded.



The last party, of two Tassie pilots, based in Dubai from way back.

John Bryan & Barry Whitmore. B.W. has since retired back to Tas.

Day 5 was spent in Dubai JOURNEY TO JAPAN DAY 6

Having rested at Dubai, today is to be a simple flight to Karachi.



The Indus Delta appears out of the mist a sign that Karachi is 20 min away, flight time today was 5hrs 10 min.

JOURNEY TO JAPAN DAY 7

Today is to be a long journey of 8hrs 50min. 1171nm and two fuel stops.

During planning for this journey we were told there was no Customs at Bhopal, so this necessitated a landing at Ahmadabad.



There was the usual time wasting run around, the fuel truck was broken, but the driver says may be able to fix it in two hours.

Having wasted so much time already, I elected to go to Bhopal.

Arrival was quite friendly, only to find out that Customs was available despite our enquiries.

However, there was an even greater problem. TODAY IS SUNDAY.

Having paid the handling fee in dollars and filed a flight plan I headed to the fuel man.

He has plenty of fuel, but he wants Rupees as payment.

The banks are closed today, the only way out of this situation is to drive to the hotel which is 20 miles down the road, pay for a room and they may change some money.

There has to be another solution as this method is wasting time.

I am offered some tea in the best Indian tradition.

After 45 minutes a man appears through the gate and is looking at the Trinidad, the fuel man appears and is talking to this man, then they both approach me.

This stranger asks if I have a problem, I answer, 'YES a financial problem'.

With that the fuel man asks how many litres I need, he calculates a huge number of Rupees.

The other man puts his hand in his pocket and takes out a mobile phone and proceeds to jabber away to whoever, then pauses to say his colleague will be here in 45 minutes, is that OK!

We all retire to the tea room and sip more tea and wait.

Sure enough right on que' the man with the money arrives, I exchange Dollars for Rupees and the fuel starts flowing.

I soon leave Bhopal in the fading light with 4hrs 15 mins to get to Kolkata.

It is soon dark and I end up dodging a line of CB's with quite a bit of lightning which revealed the position of the nearest and biggest.

Whilst all this was going on I had a call from a Cathay Pacific freighter crew wanting to know if I was trying to break some record – we changed frequency and had a chat about the weather which wasn't too bad from their angle, one of them came from Reigate – small world..!!

I eventually arrived at Kolkata having taken a total of 14 hours elapsed time since leaving Karachi. Soon I am running the gauntlet of Kolkata airport ground staff all asking for gifts and each trying to attract your attention in different directions, when my first priority is fuel, then the flight office.

JOURNEY TO JAPAN DAY 8



Having spent a couple of hours in the local airport hotel, I am waiting

for taxi clearance. Can't see what the holdup is, as I am the only aircraft on the vast apron at Kolkata. It took another 50min to finally get released for the short flight to Chittagong, just 192nm.



This scene from the Ganges Delta looks peaceful, but we were actually pushing a very strong headwind from the south east at altitude.



Chittagong comes into sight dead ahead in light rain.

This was a rather laid back place where the fueling took an hour, all measured to a gallon can and then poured through a chamois leather.

I wasn't in a hurry as the early morning wind was against me and the system looked to be moving away to the west fairly quickly, becoming a tailwind on the way across Myanmar and Thailand.



Climbing out of Chittagong the famous Irrawaddy river comes into

view as we head south for the next 789nm to Rayong in Thailand.



It was a good day across Thailand.



The day ended at Rayong a civil and military airport on the south coast of Thailand

One of the army personal took me to a hotel and collected me in the morning.

JOURNEY TO JAPAN DAY 9

Early departure out of Rayong for a flight down the Malya Peninsular to Penang.



Short finals at Penang (Col.1) for a quick fuel stop after 3hrs 35min.

The only snag here was the fact they wanted Malaysian Dollars for the fuel which meant a short walk into the terminal building to the bank within without clearing customs. How cool is that.?



Seletar, Singapore appears out of the low cloud and rain which stopped just before landing.



Final approach at Seletar, after 5hrd 40min. Another cool place with low formalities, leave your details on the appropriate desk and it will be dealt with in time for your departure.

JOURNEY TO JAPAN DAY 10



Today's flight would take 5hrs 40min to a lovely place in East Malaysia, Kota Kinabalu and the handling agent had a famous name, and he looked like his namesake, Errol Flynn, a real life character.



Final approach to Kota Kinabalu



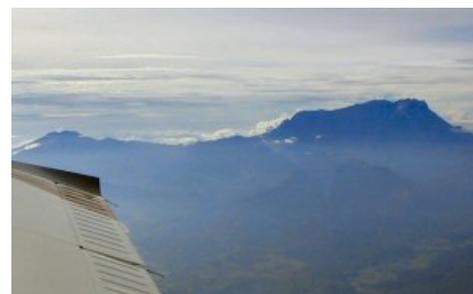
The view from my hotel room.

JOURNEY TO JAPAN DAY 11

Another early departure heading north to Manila (Clark Field) in the Philippines.



The many boat people living close to Kota Kinabalu airfield.



The picturesque Kota Kinabalu, which is not a volcano as such but divided by a large split. Each day a coach takes people to a National Park where guides take over and take people on a guided tour the coach returns again at 20.00hrs.

JOURNEY TO JAPAN DAY 12

It takes just 5hrs 10min to reach Manila (Clark Field) a large American Airbase void of aircraft and people, but still a nice place.



Stacks of room, no complicated taxiways – simple..!!

The fuel truck arrived with JETA1 emblazoned on the side, I requested AVGAS 100LL please !

With lots of giggling and sorry, sorry the driver departs and returns with an even bigger fuel truck which has more wheels than a Jumbo Jet, BUT still wrong.

There appears to be a language barrier, so I decide to speak to the controller and explain my plight.

He asks if I can see the Red & White markers visible way across the airfield - you have to go there.

I ask for taxi clearance and he tells me I have to take - off because it is over the fence.

After take-off I will tell you where to look.

I duly take-off and the controller explains this place is on my left wingtip.

I can't see anything, but the Controller says stay there and you will find it. Sure enough I spotted several light aircraft parked in grass field, then I spotted a short strip with the rest of it entering a corn field.

The controller assured me I had found the right place and the strip was 900 metres long.

It was also somewhat fortunate because I had been advised prior to the flight that the Philippines do not advise clearances until two days beforehand,

Fortunately the aviation company here had a fax and within minutes I was able to confirm my clearances.



This field is called Omni and there is a large flying school here operating 22 aircraft for Philippine Airlines.

Refuelling was a careful procedure measuring fuel from a 200 ltr drum into a gallon can then filtered through a chamois leather – it took one and half hours to fill the tanks.

I called Clark Field and basically climbed back over the fence,

Filed my flight plan for the next day to Naha, and retired to a very nice hotel outside the boundary of the airfield mainly for USAF personal, it was basically empty, but comfortable.



The view from my room was typically tropical.



A pool side bar, ideal in hot countries.

JOURNEY TO JAPAN DAY13

So far, whilst there has been some unforeseen delays along the way I have managed to maintain the

schedule for this ferry flight.

It is a beautiful day at Clark Field, I call my agent in Japan and advise my position.

Things take a step back as I start the engine and contact the tower. My flight plan filed yesterday, can't be found.

After 10 minutes I shut down the engine as I need all the fuel I have on board.

Keeping one radio on. the controller suggests calling on the HF to the Flight Centre for the area and we wait.

Exactly one hour late I am cleared to go, I call my agent in Japan and advise arrival time at Naha, Okinawa will be one hour later than the planned arrival.



Approaching Laoag, of northern Philippines and the Luzon Strait.



Taxiing in at Naha, Okinawa after 6hrs 15min from Manila and just one hour late since leaving Biggin Hill including 6 hours lost crossing India.

I had gained a day by the time I left Dubai and then nearly lost it all.

The handling at Naha had all been arranged by Mr Mori the current owner.

He came with his secretary and a hire car. In the meantime I had to

first cross the main runway for the light aircraft night parking area.

Mr Mori drove around to my side of the airport and we then went to a nice hotel downtown Naha.



Main street of Naha with everyone on their way home from work.

We head out for an evening meal to a Japanese Restaurant with a traditional floor show.



Geisha dancers at Naha restaurant.



Mr Mori, JB and Kurahashi, with the Geisha dancers on stage.

This was a very good restaurant with typical entertainment and I ate snake for the first time.

The Japanese wine was excellent, different than European, but good.



Kurahashi and JB with a set of genuine Japanese chopsticks.

JOURNEY TO JAPAN DAY 14

Today we are three people on board for Kagoshima for a fuel stop and a lunch break.



Suddenly during refuelling we are informed there is to be a Space Satellite launch nearby and the airport will be closed for the rest of the day in two hours.

We board the aircraft and leave for Yao, the aircrafts final destination.



Japan is a relatively small country with densely populated areas as shown in the picture above showing places that are time consuming to get to by road and every piece of arable land is occupied wherever possible.

Japan covers an area of 145 thousand sq mls with a population of 127 million in 2012.

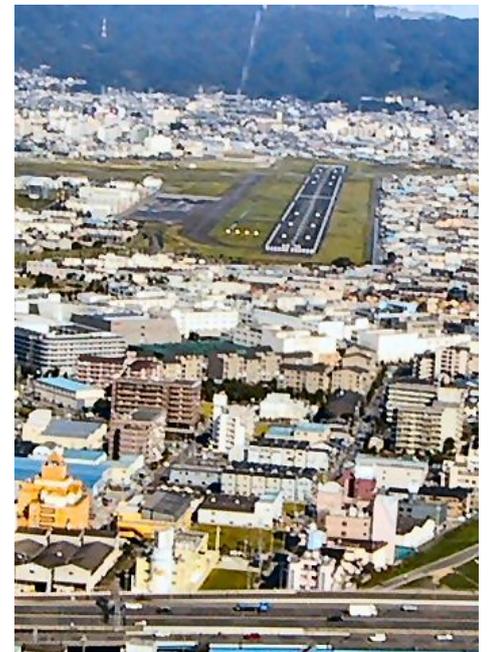
Japan is a rather rugged country made up of 3,000 islands with four main islands.

Hokaido, Honshú, Shikok, Kyúshú.

Japan will fit into Australia 20 times, given straight edges its population will swamp Australia's population by 48 times, which means we could have 3.2 people for every mile of the Australian coastline. During WWII there was only one person for every four miles. We seem to have become side-tracked with statistics. Pay attention to the flying.



Kurahashi and JB approaching Yao



Positioning finals for Yao, our last landing in Japan. Serious landings only here..!!

I bet they never receive complaints from low flying aircraft.



The hangar crew at Yao guides us along the yellow line. From here we take an internal flight to Tokyo where I will spend a couple of days sight seeing.



The entrance to my hotel (RICOH) looked very impressive with the Rolls Royce parked outside.



Whilst my room was comfortable the view from within was somewhat restricted but the TV was full screen..!



The motorways in Tokyo are stacked above each other which is quite impressive with escape stairs down to ground level should your vehicle break down.



The tall but small looking building behind the yellow crane is a unique automatic vertical carpark above and below ground.

The real danger at ground level, are the cyclists who appear to have right of way on the pavement and do not give way at all....weird..!!



The centre of Tokyo has a large shopping arcade and an equally large bus depot and taxi rank.



You will never see anyone crossing the road here as it is positively dangerous they have ramps which join the arcade shopping from the pavement.



The entrance to the railway station is impressive, and it is surrounded by a large shopping precinct. This is the entrance to Tokyo rail terminal within the shopping precinct.

The journey to Japan ends on the 29th September 2003 as I head for



Narita airport in my private taxi, we pass a huge ferris wheel which had 75 cars, I didn't count them just then, but enlarged the picture at a later stage. It looked like an exciting ride to take.

There is also a mono-rail to Narita airport which runs from the centre of Tokyo above roadways and buildings, quite impressive.



Hong Kong airport reception area.



Hong Kong I change from JAL to Cathay Pacific for London.