



# BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT BUGLE

News from our Airport at Biggin Hill - established 2005



CLUB AND AIRPORT NEWS

BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT SOCIAL CLUB LTD

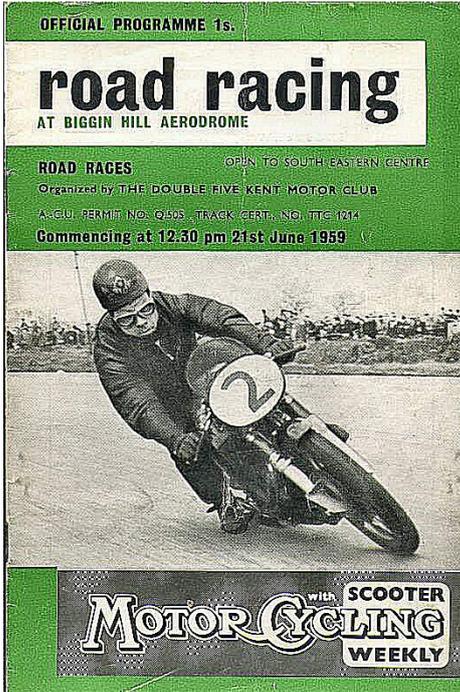
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## AERODROME BIKE RACING



**This, we believe is a true tale,** The Double Five Kent Motor Club started their early days on the Salt Box field of which the R.A.F. was the Landlord and it was to them that they we're indebted for its use. This contract led to them becoming more ambitious with thoughts of extending their activities to motor cycle racing on the aerodrome. This was quite an undertaking for a club with only moderate resources. A meeting was held with the appropriate officer at the control tower and he indicated that they could have the use of the perimeter track and that part of the runway that lay behind Leaves Green. For those of you familiar with the area, that is roughly from the Kings Arms to the Crown pub. The entrance to the circuit was to be Milking Lane, which pre-war went from the Kings Arms to Downe

Village, crossing Downe Golf Course. This lane, become a dead end when the airfield extension was made. The usual formalities followed applying to the ACU for the inspection and approval of the prepared circuit which took part of the adjacent perimeter track, and a few hundred yards of the runway. On race day a chicane was made up on the runway consisting of yellow painted oil drums. This race circuit also included a grass section. When the regulations were finally published some well known names, included A.Minter, W.Boddice, P.Read, and Ginger Payne – these people would become top class motor cycle champions around all the circuits within the UK. From this simple beginning we the flying club members would soon have our own night races in these early years. These races were of the spontaneous variety without restrictive regulations of the RAC or ACU or any other body, although there was a form of handicapping to make racing fair, as vehicles ranged from a Ford Anglia, Morris Minor, Camper Vans, Vintage Classics, Jaguar to Ferrari. It was like a mini 'Le Mans' but didn't last for 24 hours. (*more like two to four minutes*). Everybody would return to the bar afterwards and discuss the pro's and cons of how, and where they went wrong, whilst the steaming vehicles cooled down outside, so that they could, hopefully be driven home without failure – these night races didn't do any favours for these, non race prepared vehicles.

most were on extended mileage, with rattling big-ends with lots of piston slap, and low oil pressure. (These were the halcyon days of motor racing, which were scattered around various disused airfields from World War II). But then, we had our own active airfield circuit, just a few yards (*we didn't have metres in those days*) from the doorsteps of the many flying clubs that littered the airfield along with those absolutely scoundrel 'Pilot Chappies' that blighted the airfield in those days. There are but a few left who can bore their fellow compatriots into buying them a drink – these are the skilful few that are left. Echoing the immortal words of 'Winston Churchill'. *Never, has so much been owed to so few*'. Buy us a drink, before these stories become as dry as your throat. It is your future heritage that is at stake.

## RECOGNISE THIS PLACE

Can anyone identify this place? Remarkably it hasn't changed much, whilst all around has grown.



These were the days when very little happened and this place was considered to be out in the country. It was safe to cross the road without looking either way, as long as you didn't slip and break a leg.

## RIZONJET HANGAR GROWS

As previously reported, the skeleton out of the mist, The Rizonjet Hangar is beginning to take shape and defines the finished



size - quite large, the eastern end appears to consist of an operations centre.



When this area is completed it will hide part of the airfield for some, but the actual outlook will be greatly improved when the old buildings nearby are demolished. and this area is finally landscaped.

## BIGGIN HILL'S FUEL FARM

Some pilots have viewed this new installation with some scepticism, but this will save time at the end of the day – no need to call the fuel man, who is often out of the office fuelling a jet, or over the other side of the airfield or awaiting clearance from the tower to cross the runway.



This fuelling point is situated to the north of 29 / 11 off the 'Kilo' taxiway, with sufficient room for 4 aircraft. There are two pumps, enabling two aircraft to refuel at once, with two aircraft waiting in

line. The pumps are approached from opposite directions and each aircraft can exit ahead of the other. Once you have positioned the aircraft at the pump, attach the earth cable to the earth / ground point on the aircraft. The fuel hose is easily pulled out, and the bonus point is an electric rewind for the hose. Don't forget to rewind the earth cable!

Payment is automatically deducted from your fuel account, then it is time for a pint. But don't forget to take the aircraft back to the hangar first, cheers ...!!

## AIRFIELD PERSONALITIES

John Bryan, known to his friends as "JB" (self described – Professional Tourist), was born at Evandale, Tasmania in 1933, just two miles from the grass airfield at Western Junction....



World War II saw this aerodrome turned into a large flight training school for the RAAF. Although forbidden to loiter on the road leading past the airfield, JB became friendly with the sentries and was allowed to conceal himself behind the hedge and watch the many flights (of mainly Tiger Moths) coming and going. He learned to drive in 1945, when he was just 12 years old, but it would be 4 years before he was legal on the road, by which time he had gained lots of driving experience. He began his personal association with aircraft and aviation at the Tasmanian Aero Club at the age of 15. During this period, across a five bar gate at the airport, he met Anthony Eden, the then British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs – Later Prime Minister. (Eden was considered to be the best dressed man in Britain at that

time). This chance meeting for JB would be the first of many well known dignitaries he has met, from Princes to Presidents, Royalty, plus many other wonderful people, all of whom would become, long term reliable friends.



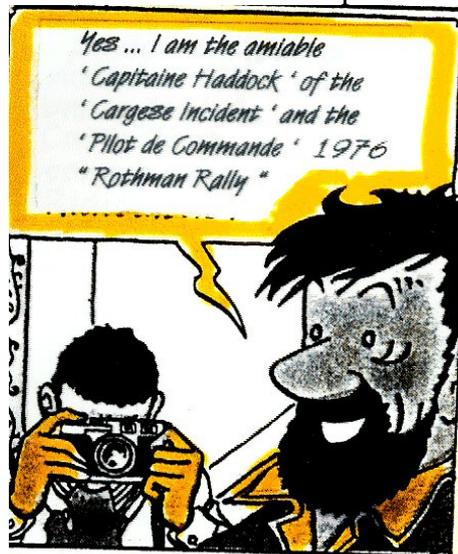
In 1949 he started work for Australian National Airways and, although just 16, it wasn't long before he was able to taxi a DC3 solo. Just imagine being allowed to do that today – the health and safety brigade would have wet themselves!! Things were apparently very laid back in those far off days in Tasmania.

Eventually moving to the Australian mainland, he purchased one of the first six BMW motor cycles to be imported into the country, riding to northern Queensland and beyond doing 500 miles a day on the open roads with no speed limits. But in 1956 he packed his bags and headed (initially) for Italy with the uncertainty of the Suez Canal being opened. At the time of his previous brief meeting with the now PM, Anthony Eden, he had no idea that this person would become so involved in a conflict that came close to affecting JB's own life, and did affect the lives of so many others! Eventually arriving in the UK after six months on the Continent, his next stop would be to the famous Brands Hatch Race

Circuit and the Isle of Man TT Races. He always carried a camera and was invited to become a freelance photographer for Motor Cycle News which gave free access to many circuits around the UK. But in 1963 a visit to the first Biggin Hill Air Show re-kindled his interest in aviation. After joining Biggin Hill Flying Club in 1964 he achieved a first solo after 6 hours. Building his hours, he went on to commence training for an Instructors Rating at Surrey & Kent in 1966 with the late Peter Chinn. In July 1966 Biggin Hill Flying Club, became a full time club, JB became its CFI, operating two Austers and a Victa Air Tourer. Subsequently, some 18 months later the club moved into larger premises, and expanded its fleet with two more Victa Air Tourers and a Rallye, (the latter of which was to become the beginning of a long association with SOCATA (A division of Aerospatiale) built aircraft. JB gained his Examiners Rating and would continue to Instruct for the next 34 years. Moving in 1971 to Air Touring Club as CFI, and did his first ferry flight to Akureyri, on the north coast of Iceland with a Rally 100. From this one trip, a succession of ferry flights all over the world for Aerospatiale followed over the next 31 years. (inter-dispersed with other non Aerospatiale ferry activities). In the summer of 1976, Rothmans, in association with Grand Metropolitan Hotels of France, Socata, and Pilot Privé, sponsored a 9 day 3,000km, tour of the UK by 34 French pilots, and 12 Rallye 893 aircraft. JB was provided with a backup Rallye 894E from the factory carrying some spares and tools.



Returning to Toussus Le Noble after a faultless journey, one aircraft suffered a severe engine gear failure near Beauvais and made a forced landing. He was dispatched to collect the downed crew and transport them back to Toussus where a celebration party was laid on for the participants. JB was presented with a leather flying jacket and christened '*Capitaine Haddock*' because of his uncanny resemblance to this famous character in the journal '*Tin Tin*'. Unbeknown to these fellow pilots, this name, had already been bestowed upon him by the Corsican Press from a previous



incident, during a trip to Libya with five aircraft. (*It's a rather long story – he'll recount it some other time! – JW*). In 1977 he was asked to visit Delhi (Safdarjang) for the presentation of two aircraft to the Delhi Flying Club following the purchase of an early Airbus by Air India. JB would fly with the, then to be, next Crown Prince of India (Sanji Ghandi) in a 3<sup>rd</sup> aircraft which he was delivering to Bankstown, (Sydney). Whilst there, he revisited Tasmania during this trip. (some 21 years since he left those far off shores). In 1978 he took up the post of CFI for Aerogulf Flying School at Dubai airport. The weather here was so good that, in one year he achieved 1,000 hours! He left Dubai late in 1980, only to return to the UAE with a Maule 235 aircraft.

Following a few weeks back in Dubai he then departed to Fort Worth, Texas for six months, followed by Johannesburg for the next six months, making this a year's holiday. A couple of months were spent in the UK before returning to live in Johannesburg. But the lure of ferry flying drew him back to Europe and he spent the next 8 years ferrying to Africa, and beyond, becoming known as "**the African expert**". He got to know many people throughout Africa and always knew the ever changing political situations and how to get around them. During the mid 80's he became heavily involved with Brands Hatch Circuits, yet again, flying around Europe and the UK for the next seven years following F1 Races and many other major racing events from cars to Motor Cycle GP's. These were the halcyon days of the sport. (Many of these experiences in the motor racing world were shared with other well known past Biggin Hill'ites – the likes of Rhys Perraton, Mitch Parsons, Garry Studd and many others, who flew circuit to circuit with their respective drivers and teams, and they were always together, usually sharing the same hotels and finding rooms for each other). JB has always been ready to travel at a moment's notice, that's where the term 'Professional Tourist' came from. He has always given freely of his experience and guidance for those planning long distance flights. After all, he says, it is only another section of a cross country flight, and that is what flying is about. **Travel beyond....!**

Now in his 76<sup>th</sup> year, our JB is still actively flying – only completing a transatlantic ferry of a Mooney Acclaim with Graham Corbin as recently as June last year. From his flying exploits, and his monthly Bugle newsletter, JB is known across the world, and is one of GA's gentleman pilots.... (JSW)