



# BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT BUGLE

*News from our Airport at Biggin Hill - established 2005*

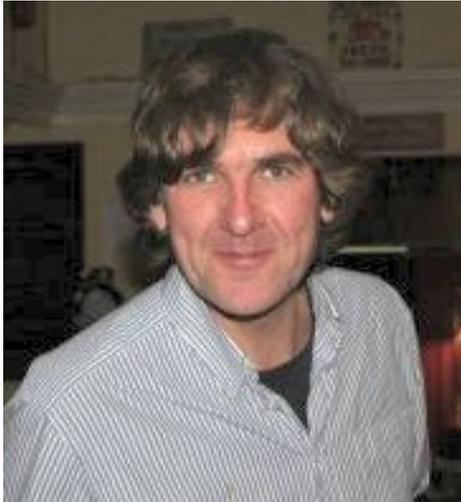


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BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT SOCIAL CLUB LTD  
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In Ass. with BigginHillReunited.co.uk  
1<sup>st</sup> February 2012

## BOB BOLSTER - TRAGEDY



EFG's CFI Commercial Instructor of Biggin Hill lost his life whilst flying a Robinson 22 Helicopter on a privately hired flight near Ely in Cambridgeshire on the 6<sup>th</sup> January.

Through the years Bob gained many ratings, and trained many fellow pilots, however he will be known best by some of the older generation as the flying dentist – due to the fact he was a fully qualified dentist with his own practice. More recently Bob and Anoop Bamrah at EFG created the Commercial School training pilots for CPL and Instructor Ratings.

Ray Watson (formerly Cabair) was appointed Chief Flying Instructor in December 2011 to aid Bob in their quest to create a world-wide recognised Commercial Institution. This legacy will not be forgotten. Bob's memory will live on.

One of the Bugle's avid readers an outdoor photographer / adventurer into the wild sends a couple of

classic pictures, taken locally showing colourful scenes.



A very hard frost near Keston ponds, a picture of his dog peering



from behind a tree with this colourful fungal trunk and finally,



a clear blue sky and blue pond.

If you have a camera (even your mobile camera) send your pictures to....

< [johnbryan13@sky.com](mailto:johnbryan13@sky.com) > if you see it, so can we. Enjoy your world, it is just around the corner.

Social Club Memberships are due once again, please make cheques

payable to Biggin Hill Social Club Ltd. £10 Single & £15 for couples £20 for families .

## AIRFIELD PERSONALITIES



**PAUL SHIRES:** Paul developed an interest in flying from his school days. As he grew up his father wanted him to join the army which he thought was a ghastly idea and elected to join the Territorial Army instead. (Well it is an Army, albeit a weekly affair). This would prove to include some flying later on, toward his forthcoming aviation career.

Paul learned to fly at Fair Oaks in 1961 flying a Tiger Moth and gained his pilots licence.

The TA used to do training exercises taking trucks and other equipment out into the wilds of the English countryside and camouflage them.

Paul being a member of the Territorial Army and pilot was given the task of finding these vehicles from the air and flying with an observer who would drop

3oz bags of flour to mark their position. For this exercise they first had to gain the permission from the Board of Trade, (today's CAA) to drop these small flour bombs.

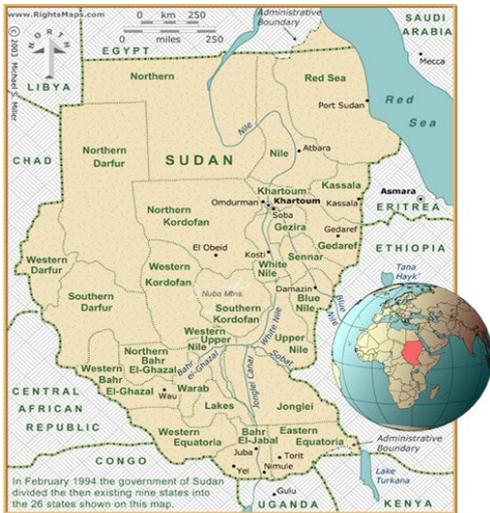
It was good fun finding these camouflaged vehicles and marking their position.

In those far off days there was a demand for Crop Spraying Pilots for the vast cotton fields of Sudan.



Paul carried out a British Flying Course out of Luton Airport, flying in and out of various farmers fields to gain experience in Bush Flying.

Two years had now passed and Paul was on his way to Sudan as a Bush Communications Pilot.



A short extract from Paul's adventures to the unknown, airborne out of Rome the eternal city flying in a DH Comet saying it



was probably an everyday experience for many people who travel, but this was different for a

person who had not ventured so far from home.

Looking out over the Port wing tip the dawn was breaking and the sun was beginning to rise above the horizon. Flying at 38,000ft the desert looked like a huge stretch of beach with no sea; the next thing to appear was Khartoum airport with many light aircraft visible below their white wing surfaces yellowed by the sun, a screech of tyres and we had arrived at Khartoum.



A gangway was pushed to the aircraft, the door opened and we descended, the heat from the engines was terrific, but when we moved away from the aircraft it was the everyday hot climate of the Sudan. Not the engines. Wow..! All passengers were hustled through customs, which was situated in a grey drab building with various types of little birds sitting on a huge fan which was turning slowly. Passports were stamped and the next thing Paul became aware of was a dark gentleman asking his name and leading him to a waiting Land Rover in which they left for the Hotel in a cloud of dust.

On arrival the baggage was collected and he was ushered into an air conditioned room which was virtually dark. (*don't you know a shadow is the cool side of a tree*).

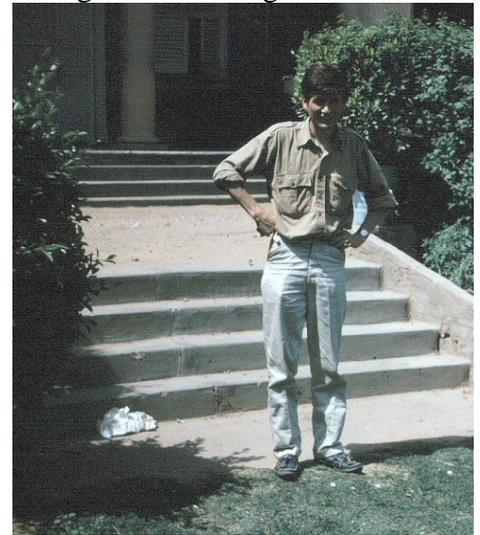
Well, a darkened room has the same effect to these people, as taught by the British, many years before.

However, having showered and changed he was putting on his socks and then noticed hundreds of ants running across the floor.

He had lunch consisting of Nile Perch, Chicken, Ice Cream and a glass of lemon.

There were so many fans turning inside the lounge resulting in a

strong wind blowing.



Paul as a young man stands on the steps of the Grand Hotel, Khartoum, where he stayed for a week to acclimatise to the surroundings and the heat.

One morning he was taken to the Airport and given a tail wheel aircraft which was to be his for the next 5 months.

It looked quite shabby and he decided to give it a quick clean and thorough inspection, after this it looked quite respectable.

The time had come for his first flight. Following a pre-flight inspection and starting the engine, The aircraft being non-radio it was necessary to get a Green Light from the Tower.



He taxied to the long shimmering runway and proceeded to take-off noticing that the aircraft was sluggish and once airborne whilst maintain a steady climbing speed the angle of climb was very low.

Airfield elevation of Khartoum Airport is 1263ft amsl and with temperatures in the mid 30's C this roughly equates to 5,000ft Density Altitude, quite a surprise for this new pilot.

Hence the reduced performance of this aircraft.

During his first circuit around Khartoum he was surprised to see

to the south nothing but sand and likewise to the north, apart from the White Nile and the joining Blue Nile, there was nothing but desert. He made a few more circuits and got used to the rising heat off the runway which tended to lift the aircraft whilst holding off.

He met up with some crop spraying pilots who bundled him into an old Chrysler and drove him to an incredible house and was informed this was their base for the weekend, the rest of the week being spent in the bush.

The next morning at 06.15 he was to fly south to Birkat with an entomologist. Their job being to



land on a strip and inspect cotton plantations for Bolworm.

The flight in the early dawn was quite beautiful as they followed the Nile which would bring them to



Birkat after two and a half hours of flight. The strip at Birkat was in a dried up river bed (Wadi) and it was necessary to take a precautionary low inspection of the surface before landing. There were no obstructions, nothing...!



Immediately on landing they were surrounded by natives that mysteriously appeared from out of the bush and wouldn't come near the plane until they disembarked.

It became evident that most of these children had never seen an aircraft and before long started running their hands along the wings touching them lightly hoping that some of the mystical power of this flying machine would pass down to them and hopefully they would be able to fly.

Before departing to inspect the cotton fields they posted a native sentry wearing a yellow hat and holding a stick to keep people off the aircraft. Returning to the strip some time later they were surprised at the large crowd that had gathered. As soon as they started the engine they all ran away and Paul and his partner were on their way once more again heading to Kosti.

The size of the Sudan needs to be flown over to appreciate the vast distances of basically nothing, except for the huge cotton fields that seemed to go on forever in this vast land. From north to south it is 1,093nm and 825nm wide in the middle and narrows to around 415nm in the southern end.

After a while one begins to learn the local features with the odd



Jebels (hills that rise quite high in places) also the surface changes here and there, which have distinct surface texture from sand to a hard gravelly surface and of course the dried up river beds (Wadi's) and there is also many tracks made by vehicles of the locals as they travel from place to place in straight lines



Wherever one went the Arabs would appear from nowhere, always inquisitive.



These boys would always help with the refuelling and always managed to syphon some off for their motor cycles, even though they were watched carefully. These people were magicians at the art of deception whilst handling vital fuel supplies.



A house in Kosti shared by the pilots and the road outside doubled



as a quality landing strip, with a turn at the end where pilots could taxi around the corner and park up for the night, or an engine change





for a Pawnee crop sprayer.



Many Pawnees have been used throughout the Sudan for spraying cotton fields, they carry a good load and are easy to fly with excellent visibility. For ferry flights the hopper can be used as a fuel tank giving dawn to dusk endurance.



There would always be one local who appeared to claim some respect carrying the famous Lee Enfield 303 rifle.



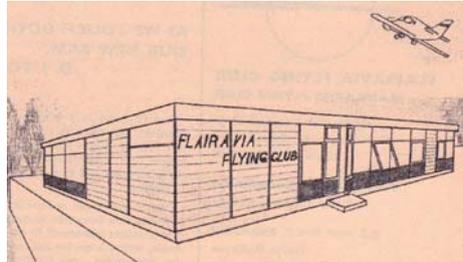
How is this for an enterprising company far from the beaten track? Not quite sure of their intentions whether it be crop dusting, or a bit of God busting. You can almost guarantee they will try to fleece you of some of your well earned Sudanese Dinars. Below with



the 'workmaster' with a 180HP engine fitted to combat the heat.

Returning to the UK Paul went to Cranfield and gained his Instructors Rating with the late Ron Campbell.

With this new rating he became an Instructor at Flairavia Flying Club at Biggin Hill.



It was here that he met David Quirk also an Instructor at Flairavia which at this time was managed by David Porter and was becoming the 'go-ahead club' of the day with a newly designed clubhouse which stood for many years afterwards.

It became one of the famous bars on the airport and well attended for several years to come.



David Quirk CFI at Flairavia and the Managing Director David Porter with a model Hurricane and a Merlin Engine from a Hurricane.

Having instructed at Flairavia for some time Paul moved to South London Aero Club and then joined Sportair Flying Club, instructing with the RF5 Fournier aircraft. Sportair also operated the RF4's



These were the formative years and the next club would be QS Aviation managed and operated by Quirk & Shires operating a Cessna 152 Aerobat. ( 1971 / 1972.)



### DEDICATED TO QUIRK & SHIRES

**In the good old days of yore  
There were aeroplanes galore  
Flying clubs were abundant  
And no pupils, were made redundant**

**For they had pockets lined with gold  
Well, that's what they we were told  
Get them up in the air  
Show them your panache, and flair**

**At Biggin Hill the sun did shine  
The world was yours, or was it mine  
There were many flying clubs  
And lots and lots of pubs**

**The flying schools were everywhere  
Some were in the trees, or over there  
Most were good, some were bent  
Many came and many went**

**(Wessex / Wemair, oily Doyle is not included in this bloody foil)**

**Active, Anderson, that's Ron Brown  
In those days, he wore the crown  
When you ask is he around  
One could say, he's gone to ground**

**Quirk and Shires, the name lives on  
They still come to Biggin, off and on  
Paul Shires he married one day  
David Quirk is a bachelor, to this day**

*Poem by John Bryan 1997*

How times have changed..! The characters remained unchanged and appear to have a common bond as long as they have a beer in their

hands during an airshow, as an excuse to celebrate.



*Valerie & Paul, Faulkner & Quirk, at Biggin Hill Air Show 2003.*

David and Paul still meet weekly and take a flight together. All in all they have been flying for nearly 50 years.

Indeed, times have changed...!!

The story doesn't end here, there is a little bit more of Pauls expertise. In 1975 Paul was offered a drive at Brands Hatch in a friends racing car, and took to racing like a duck to water. The picture below shows Paul competing in a Brabham BT18 at Druids.

His enthusiasm lead to the purchase of an Aston Martin DB4.

His enthusiasm lead to the purchase of an Aston Martin DB4.



This new acquisition would be lightened and fitted with a roll cage.

This specialist work was carried out by Richard Stewart Williams, who is well known for his preparation of DB4 Aston Martins.



RSW Ltd, still thrives to this day preparing race cars and improving race technology.

Paul raced his car at many British circuits and several French circuits during his colourful and somewhat successful motor racing life.

Paul has hung up his helmet and gloves for a more casual life in the Surrey country side, remaining as modest as ever.

Perhaps a little more thought and understanding for the workings of this modern day baby carriage may not have lead to this small dilemma, as to which way up things should be.



If this is the prior to entering the store, the exit which will include a trolley loaded full of goods, plus baby and pram will be quite fascinating. Unfortunately we can't wait for the outcome – far too stressful.

This comment came from one of the Bugles readers.

As you may have heard the British Government has agreed on the new proposal for the new rail between London and Birmingham.

This will make life easier for families living in London to visit their relations that live in Birmingham and vice versa

An artist impression of the new high speed train – it is estimated to have a 1,000 place capacity for the summer service only.



However this scheme will obviously have serious Health & Safety restrictions applied and will not work as intended.

How many of you remember the old Frank Sinatra film, 'Flying Down To Rio' with all the dancing girls on the wing of the aeroplane – just doesn't work..!