



BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT BUGLE

News from our Airport at Biggin Hill - established 2005



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'KING BILLY COKE BOTTLE'



It was April and the Aborigines in a remote part of the Northern Australia asked their new elder if the coming winter was going to be cold or mild.

Since he was an elder in a modern community he had never been taught the old secrets.

When he looked at the sky he couldn't tell what the winter was going to be like.

Nevertheless, to be on the safe side, he told his tribe that the winter was indeed going to be cold and that the members of the tribe should collect firewood to be prepared.

But being a practical leader, after several days he had an idea.

He walked out to the telephone booth on the highway, called the Bureau of Meteorology and asked, 'Is the coming winter in this area going to be cold?'

The meteorologist responded 'It looks like this winter is going to be cold..!'

So the elder went back to his people and told them to collect even more wood in order to be prepared.

A week later he called the Bureau of Meteorology again..

'Does it still look like it is going to be a very cold winter?'

The meteorologist again replied, 'Yes it is going to be a very cold winter.'

The elder went back to his community and ordered them to collect every scrap of firewood they could find.

Two weeks later the elder called the Bureau again.

'Are you absolutely sure that the winter is going to very cold?' he asked.

'Absolutely,' the man replied, 'It's looking more, and more like it is going to be one of the coldest winters ever.'

'How can you be so sure?' the elder asked.

The weatherman replied, 'Our satellites have reported that the Aborigines in the north are collecting firewood like crazy, and that's always a sure sign.'

The above article was sent in by one of our avid members (LDH)



We showed this Satellite Image to 'King Billy Coke Bottle,' his reply was that he didn't understand all these isobaric lines going round and round on a piece of paper.

He said when he chucked his Boomerang, it goes round and round and it come back, just like the bloody weather, same thing every year, bloody winter come back, my people are forced to collect firewood to keep warm.

BIGGIN HILL TO CAPETOWN



TOUR D'AFRIQUE.....!'

The 1960's were good to me. As an ab-initio instructor I operated a small flying club on a shoestring at Biggin Hill, Kent. Financial reward was not the main issue of my existence. Flying; the smell of airplanes; the exhilaration of breaking the ties with terra firma as I pulled back on the joystick and entered a third dimension; to see the boundary hedge disappearing beneath my wings – that was a life worth living. My earlier parachuting days as an army red beret were interesting but after 84 jumps one tended to be a little blasé about leaping out into the space below. Not so with piloting a plane. After 22,000 hours behind the control column the adrenalin still rises as I open the taps for take-off and ease them back again on approach.

It was during those halcyon and

It was during those halcyon and happy-go-lucky days that Don Parker, one of our club members at Biggin Hill, became the focus of my attention. Now Don was a strange character - gentlemanly. He'd previously held a private licence but had long since let it lapse and so it fell very quietly spoken with an Oxford-type accent (in between puffs of his pipe) and terribly to me to bring him up to scratch and enable him to re-activate his PPL. He was an ex-RAF rear gunner of a Lancaster bomber and had now become a successful businessman with a string of laundrettes. After a few training sessions I managed to check him out solo in a Auster high-wing monoplane; an aircraft with very few vices that could be grossly mishandled on landing without mishap, which made it ideal as a trainer.

Thereafter Don put in quite regular appearances at the club to swan off for the odd flight around the local area, and as he always paid his fees on time, and forever ready with a tale or two to tell in a most convivial manner, he became one of our more valued members.

It was late in 1963 when Don suddenly announced that he wanted to fly to Cape Town for Christmas, taking as passengers his wife and three young daughters and would I like to go along? Originally I took this suggestion with a pinch of salt, little realising he was in earnest. However on each visit to the club he would fetch up the subject again and I kept him amused by lending an ear, still convinced it was just idle gossip on his part. Then one day he casually informed me that he was well advanced with negotiations for the lease of an aircraft called a De Havilland DH89a Rapide, the very same type in which fifteen years earlier I had taken my very first joy ride. It then slowly dawned on me that Don was deadly serious and the thought of undertaking such an adventure both thrilled and alarmed me at the

same time! He'd already made up his mind to leave the UK in time to reach Cape Town by Christmas. By this time I had become deeply involved and under an obligation to Don, as I had been obliged to leave my digs in the local village and he kindly allowed me to live rent free in a small cottage he owned behind one of his business premises, Pitts Cottage, in Westerham, Kent, the former home of the 18th century Prime Minister 'William Pitt the Younger'. His lady manager had recently vacated 'Little Pitts Cottage' as it was called, when her two unruly sons had wreaked so much havoc at the place that she was obliged to seek employment elsewhere. I shared the cottage with Don's new manager, a Swiss chap, and was now so deeply committed to Don as his house guest to even contemplate the thought of pulling out of the venture, not having two brass farthings to rub together; nowhere to live; little income and winter approaching fast.

So it was that one day I found myself accompanying Don to a hotel foyer in the London area to meet a gentleman called Brian Neely, a BOAC Comet co-pilot and the co-owner of a Rapide, registration G-ALGC. We'd also been in touch with a somewhat dubious character, the son of a rich farmer, who was desperately trying to hire us a similar but more advanced Rapide fitted with variable pitch propellers. Initially this seemed to be the better option but having gained our interest, he then calmly informed us that part of the deal necessitated doing a side trip and dropping in at Nairobi on the way out to do an engine change due to one of the engines being almost time expired. In the end we changed our minds owing to the time factor and uncertainty of the situation and decided to accept Brian Neely's more business-like offer instead. However I did get to fly the other chap's Rapide later the following year, doing joy-riding at Biggin

Hill, but didn't care for it very much. I had continuous difficulty trying to keep the two mismatched engines synchronised and was glad in hindsight that we chose Brian Neely's aircraft instead, even though it had the basic fixed-pitch propellers.



Our Rapide G-ALGC at Biggin Hill before our departure to Capetown.

Through the Royal Aero Club, whom I must admit rendered us splendid service and utmost co-operation, arrangements were made with fuel companies to lay on supplies at the various planned stops en-route where fuel wasn't normally available. The Customs carnets were to be obtained for the temporary export / import of the aircraft and a host of other details far too numerous to mention. Although the RAC provided us with much valuable information about the proposed routeing, there were numerous gaps to be filled and many unknowns. To the best of their knowledge such a lengthy flight in a Rapide had never been attempted before; possibly during the war years where they had full service support, but with many of the countries we contemplated transiting through being now newly independent, and therefore no longer under British control, anything could (and probably would) happen.

The first problem was with the range of the Rapide, being essentially a short-range aircraft, in that its standard tanks only gave a little over two hundred miles in nil-wind conditions. This was quite insufficient for many of the longer sectors planned, with no alternate landing places in between. However, in the flying fraternity

there is always someone ready and willing to assist a fellow aviator. It was suggested that we fit a De Havilland Dove's overload tank to accommodate the extra fuel required. One of these miraculously appeared from somewhere. This would now increase our range to cover the longer legs envisaged, only just though and with no contingency fuel as reserves, barely enough from departure to destination. We set about removing the middle seat on the right-hand side of the passenger cabin and fitted the overload tank about the position of the centre of gravity and then arranged the plumbing in such a way that we could feed from the new tank to either wing tank. Needless to say, with so much high-octane fuel in the cabin area, 'no smoking' was the order of the day. Onto the next problem.

Somebody had warned us that Gypsy Queen engines were renowned 'oilers' and although we may have sufficient fuel for the longer sectors, we would almost certainly not have sufficient 'oil' endurance. So another brick wall we had to scale. Then, out of the blue someone informed us that during the war, the DH Rapide, or the Dominie as it was known in the RAF, was sometimes fitted with long-range oil tanks to cover this particular situation. So the hunt began. Eventually we received reliable information that there was an old derelict Rapide up at Bagington (Coventry) airport that probably had long range oil tanks. We made enquiries and Hey Presto! A pair of oil tanks were available which had already been removed and stored as the rest of the aircraft structure had by now been broken up for spares.

Up to Coventry we all flew in one of the club's aircraft and then after a bit of 'Arab-style' bargaining we managed to obtain the fuel tanks at our price and returned with them to Biggin Hill. They were duly cleaned up,

pressure tested and sprayed, but then another problem faced us. The stranded-wire cables that had held the original oil tanks were now too short to go around our new larger tanks.

Saved again. A very good engineer at Biggin Hill, and an occasional bar friend of mine who was about to emigrate to Australia, just happened to be spending his last few days at Biggin Hill clearing up odds and ends. He knew how to splice wire cable to the threaded metal ends and after a bit of friendly persuasion, and the odd pint or two of the amber liquid as an inducement, he accepted the task and consequently made a splendid job of it for us. We fitted the tanks in position and began replacing the cowlings. Then another Gremlin raised its ugly head.

With the larger tanks the cowlings wouldn't fit properly, so off they came again and with the assistance of a panel beater we bulged them out to make them fit.

Our bladder endurance had already been taken care of by the inclusion of an enclosed toilet fitted at the starboard rear of the cabin fitted with an Elsan loo. We were highly amused at the 'vacant-engaged' sign on the door (as if we wouldn't have known if anyone was in there)!

Being somewhat restricted for both space and weight we were obliged to have a very short list of spares. We'd decided that if possible we should at least make room for a complete main wheel, fitted with tyre, as this was probably the most likely spare we would need. I thought about taking just the tyre without the wheel, being so heavy, but decided that maybe it would be more prudent to take the complete assembly. This was bulky and heavy and in the event we fortunately never required it, but as an ex-boy scout it was best to 'be prepared'. If we had an incident at a remote jungle strip without a spare,

then heaven help us. The rest of the spares consisted of items such as spare sparking plugs, a starter and various other bits and bobs.

Don acquired a whole bundle of traveller's cheques to take with him (long before the days of the plastic credit cards) and methodically inspected the aircraft from end to end looking for convenient hiding places, which I thought somewhat strange at the time. Then in a light-hearted moment he informed me that he would pay me a subsistence allowance of five pounds per week whilst on the trip with all expenses taken care of. I didn't object to this as I was in no position to do otherwise, seeing as how I was living rent free in one of his properties, plus the UK winter approaching fast and the flying club income dropping off. Anyway, I rather fancied the idea of a paid holiday in the sun. Besides, my business partner Charlie Vaughan, could manage to run the club on his own during my long absence in the off-peak season with only one mouth to feed now instead of two.

I calculated the flight from Biggin Hill to Cape Town would take about fourteen days if we took it easy or a minimum of ten days not allowing for any hold ups. The object of the trip from Ron's point of view was to arrive at Cape Town just before Christmas so he could celebrate the festive season with pre-war friends. Our planned ETD was the end of the first week in December 1963 with a deadline of the twelfth.

As the day approached and the weather deteriorated I became full of foreboding as to what perils lay in store ahead for us. Although by now I was a full instructor, I was nevertheless a relatively inexperienced pilot with only very limited instrument flying experience – I was beginning to dread the unknown hazards that lay in wait for us. It wasn't so much for myself that I was concerned but for Don's wife and her three young

children, all of who had by now every confidence in my ability and complete trust in me. The misplaced child-like adoration of the three young girls was beginning to make me feel most uncomfortable to say the least. With my independent spirit as a single man (marriage was still over four years away) I had never encountered such responsibility before.

We listened to the weather forecast every day on the radio and it was not good. At last, after a few days of frustration a slight improvement in the weather was promised for the following afternoon so final preparations were made for our departure. That evening at the bar I had a 'farewell' drink with my friends, convinced I would never see them again.

Charlie Vaughan, with the aid of a chinagraph pencil on the bar's counter, described to me how the Marconi ADF (Automatic Direction Finder) worked; I hadn't a clue, having never used one before. That bit of information was the best advice he ever gave me. By this time also most of the Biggin Hill fraternity knew of our venture and were already laying bets as to how far we would get before it all came to a grinding halt. Firmly believing myself by now that it would be nothing short of a miracle to reach Cape Town, let alone get back in one piece to tell the tale, I happily accepted all their five-pound bets and even suggested doubling them, asserting that not only would we reach Cape Town by Christmas, but we would also return to Biggin safe and sound early in the New Year – I had nothing to lose! Strangely, it was those bar wagers, plus my grave concern for the safety of the three young girls and a large element of good luck, that became the driving force I needed to bolster my rapidly flagging spirits.

THE OUTBOUND TRIP

December 12th 1963... dawned

overcast with showers of rain and sleet accompanied with blustering cold easterly winds – I was not very happy! However with Don champing at the bit, combined with a promise of a slight improvement by early-afternoon, I had no alternative but to give the green light and commenced making preparations for our departure. I was particularly concerned about my lack of experience with the Rapide having barely flown more than a couple of circuits in her. It's a lovely old girl but requires a fair amount of handling in rough weather, especially in crosswind conditions, and at that stage I simply didn't have that sort of experience on her. She won't abide fools or novices as numerous pilots have discovered to their chagrin.

The forecast improvement arrived by early-afternoon, by which time I was beginning to wish that I was anywhere in the world except just about to climb into the driving seat of G-ALGC. '*What had I let myself in for*' I thought to myself? There's no turning back now so everybody aboard; engines started and warmed up; radio clearance to taxi to the holding point of runway 11; magnetos checked; line up; clearance to take-off; one last glance at dear old Biggin Hill, wondering if we would ever meet again; both throttles opened gently to catch the swing as the tail came up and we were on our way. A bit of a stagger after she lifted off in the blustery wind, as depicted by the only photo (long since lost) of our departure taken by a well-wisher and we were finally airborne. Le Touquet was to be our first intended stop across the Channel. Our epic adventure was about to commence...

The low cloud kept me down to below 800 feet at first; having no desire to enter the murky overcast and then fly on instruments so early in the piece with my lack of experience. The inclement weather

persisted all the way to the coast and beyond as I set course direct for France. The sea below us was full of whitecaps and I noticed the waves breaking over the bows of the ships we crossed as they heaved and rolled in the pounding seas; 'sooner than us' I thought! Eventually the outline of the French coastline appeared dimly through the sleet-splattered windshield and I quickly got my bearings. I turned right on reaching Cap Gris Nez and following the coast down to Le Touquet. The river and airfield hove into sight and the Air Traffic Controller (ATC) cleared me to land, having offered (at my request I hasten to add) the shorter but more into-wind runway heading towards the river, as I had no desire to practice crosswind landings at this stage of the proceedings. The landing (if you can call it that – 'arrival' would have been more appropriate) was bumpy and I experienced considerable difficulty keeping her straight once the tail went down in the gusty conditions. I taxied slowly in and parked close to some other light aircraft as instructed by the controller. Being wintertime it was already rapidly approaching dusk by the time we'd finished refuelling for the morrow's flight so after clearing arrival and Customs procedures, and without further ado, we took a taxi to a cheap hotel. After our evening meal and a beer I turned in, mentally and physically exhausted from the strain of our departure.

December 13th 1963... A quick Continental breakfast and we were soon airborne again en-route to Lyons. Although the weather had improved at Le Touquet, I started running into low cloud again near Paris. Staying as low as I dared to keep clear of the commercial traffic, I skimmed beneath the overcast but was finally forced to climb and enter cloud on instruments because of rising ground ahead. About half an

hour went by and with thin ice now appearing on the wings and struts, which concerned me somewhat as the aircraft was not equipped for flight into icing conditions, the clouds began to break and I got my bearings from the map spread across my lap. Fortunately I had the ADF tuned into a couple of beacons on the way so I was fairly sure of my position anyway; I was beginning to like this weird and wonderful ADF gadget! The weather gradually improved and the latter part of the flight occurred in reasonably good flying conditions.

On arrival at Lyons airport after an otherwise uneventful 3½ hour flight, Don and I took care of the formalities and refuelling whilst Anne went off with the three girls for a meal in the airport restaurant, with the pair of us joining them later. Within the hour we were on our way again, this time to Nice on the French Riviera. The weather had now improved considerably and as we flew southwards following along the Rhone Valley I began to breathe more easily. Now my old confidence was beginning to flow back again and with most of the bad weather behind us I began to relax and enjoy myself.

Turning the corner as the blue Mediterranean came into view, I followed the coastline down to Nice, and after receiving the landing clearance we alighted at Cote d'Azur airport. It had taken us almost six flying hours from Le Touquet on the first full day's flying and I figured that if we maintained this average without any hiccups, with a bit of luck we should just make it to Cape Town in time for Christmas.

Formalities, as was usual in France, were kept to a minimum and soon we were in a taxi and heading for a hotel. At last I felt that we were truly on our way, with the promise of better weather and a much warmer environment to look forward to as we distanced ourselves from the cold North,

following the sun towards the Equatorial regions.

December 14th 1963... The temperatures by this time had increased to the point of shirt-sleeve order and our woollies remained unworn from that time on for the next two months. Away again early, or as early as the children would allow, as of course they wanted to see the sights of the town. By now, although we had hardly begun the long trek southwards to Cape Town, the novelty of flying was beginning to wear a little bit thin with them. I sympathised with their disappointment but time was now of the essence and we simply couldn't afford any further delays. Immediately after getting airborne I set course over the blue Mediterranean to Ajaccio in Corsica. Soon the lofty Corsican mountains appeared over the horizon and within half an hour we were in the circuit to land at Ajaccio airport. The place was not unfamiliar to me as I had been there earlier that year when I ferried an Auster aircraft out to Benghazi for the owner Dennis Revelle.

A quick refuelling stop and Customs and Immigration details attended to with the minimum of fuss, and we were once more taking off for our next intended destination which was Tunis in North Africa. Before long the children began to get restless with the youngest one Jillie starting to play-up. Poor Anne tried her best to keep them all amused but they were obviously not enjoying it very much. I attempted to relieve their boredom by inviting them to come up front, one-by-one and sit on the step just behind me to my right, pointing out the various places of interest as we flew along.

Soon we were over Sardinia and flying down the deep valleys between the hill ranges, travelling southwards all the time into warmer climes, leaving the

miserable English winter behind us. Crossing the coast near the town of Cagliari I set course across the Mediterranean towards Tunis, feeling a lot happier this time with two Gypsy Queen engines purring sweetly alongside me, than I did previously when I ferried a single-engine Auster to Benghazi earlier in the year. I was always ill at ease flying over large expanses of water with just the one engine to support me!

Cold Europe was fast receding behind us and half an hour later I saw land up ahead. Africa at last! It would be Africa all the way to Cape Town, and what an enormous continent it was too as we were soon to discover. Conditions were ideal and soon after crossing the North African coast near Bizerte, the scene of some fierce fighting in World War Two, I contacted Tunis control and was given circuit joining and landing instructions. Once again, formalities and refuelling were quickly dispensed with and we were soon bundled into a ramshackle old taxi heading for a hotel in town.

That evening after supper we strolled through the streets of Tunis in the pleasantly warm air taking in the sights. The three girls by now had shed their heavier clothes in favour of the fashionable tight shorts and T-shirts. Linda at fourteen years old was an early developer and well aware of it. Suddenly we heard this babble of voices behind us and on looking around saw a crowd of Arab men of all ages following behind us, all ogling at Linda. I was a bit slow on the uptake at first having not come across such a situation before. I should have realised it earlier though seeing all the Arab females walking around dressed like black pepper pots; clothed head-to-feet with just an eye visible through their veils. We quickly made tracks for the hotel followed by this rabble of cat-calling hooting mob of Arabs. Our first culture shock on leaving civilised Europe behind

us... There were many more to come!

December 15th 1963... Ten days to go to Christmas – would we make it in time? Barring any unforeseen calamity I felt confident we would. Another early start and before long we were airborne, climbing into the pale blue cloudless sky with the azure blue Mediterranean on our left and the pale desert sand beneath us. Spirits were high. Cold grey Europe was well behind us and the mighty African continent beneath. All we had to do was to traverse it from one end to the other! From Tunis I flew round the coast and then set course for Tripoli, having a good look at the ancient city of Carthage on the way, plus some Roman ruins called Leptis Magna I had missed on my previous trip with the Auster. Three hours after leaving Tunis we landed at the Libyan capital's international airport.

After a somewhat lengthy refuelling stop at Tripoli (it was pre-Gadaffi era of course), with Customs and Immigration formalities completed, we took off again, making a beeline across the large Gulf of Sirte to Benghazi for our next night-stop.

On the previous trip with the Auster, being a rather short-range single-engine aircraft, I was obliged to follow the very long coastline around the gulf, stopping to refuel half-way at an old disused wartime airstrip called Marble Arch, from spare cans of fuel that I carried in the cabin with me – the name Marble Arch being given by the WW2 Eighth Army owing to its vague similarity to the famous London landmark. This time though, with two engines and a longer range, it was my intention to shorten the journey by flying in a straight line from Tripoli across the wide Gulf of Sirte to Benghazi to save time. The large American airforce base of Wheelus lay off to our left and soon after passing it we were heading out over the calm blue sea. All was going according

to plan and I was feeling quite content with myself – a piece of cake really and don't know why I had been so worried about it before. I carried on in the somewhat smug satisfaction that the worst was behind us and it would be plain sailing from now on. Then it happened!

We were approximately half-way across the Gulf, well over the sea and out of sight of land, when the starboard engine began to miss the odd beat or two. I didn't bother too much at first, assuming that the problem had cleared itself, but this was soon followed by a sudden spate of very rough running. I immediately suspected fuel contamination having just refuelled at Tripoli where I gained the rather strong impression that everything tended to be somewhat slapdash. Nevertheless I checked each of the two magnetos in turn in case it was an ignition problem but the rough-running persisted. The only way I could get that engine to perform smoothly again was by reducing power in stages. It settled down and was okay again for a few minutes and I thought the problem had been cured. Then suddenly the rough running and vibration started again, this time growing progressively worse such that eventually I was obliged to reduce the power right back to the closed idle position.

Being unable to feather those type of engines with a fixed pitch propeller meant that in the idle position it was giving more drag than if the propeller had been stationary. This in turn meant that even with full power on the port engine, I could hardly hold altitude let alone the airspeed which had now dropped off alarmingly from the normal cruising speed of 105mph to around 80mph. I lowered the nose to maintain airspeed but at the expense of height and we commenced a gradual descent. There was simply no alternative for me but to land as soon as possible, so I did a ninety

degree turn to the right and headed straight for the Libyan coastline, which by this time was well out of sight beyond the horizon. Even with the port engine running at full power the drag from the wind-milling starboard engine forced me to continue descending gradually. With almost full fuel tanks and the load we were carrying, she just could not hold the altitude on one engine. I hoped and prayed to make landfall before running out of sky.

I tried my best to placate Anne and the girls who by this time were understandingly getting very concerned, by assuring them (a bit unconvincingly I felt), that all was okay and there was no cause for alarm as I had the situation well under control. Personally I was in grave doubt as to what the outcome would be! It was already late in the afternoon with the sun lowering in the reddening sky. With the sea beneath us and out of sight of land which even if we could make it would probably result in a crash-landing in the soft sand of a hostile arid desert, I began to fear the worst!

Since the engine problem deteriorated and I'd decided to head for the nearest landfall, I had been continuously transmitting the Mayday distress signal on the international emergency channel but without any response. Most commercial aircraft are normally obliged to keep a listening watch on the emergency frequency but obviously there were none in the area to relay my distress call to a Search & Rescue facility; nor was I equipped with a long-range HF radio. What to do? Suddenly through the reddening heat haze I saw the shoreline up there ahead. Thank Heavens! At least we could now make dry land but where to put the aircraft down?

By this time, trying to remain as calm as possible under the circumstances, I decided that the best course of action would be to attempt a landing parallel to the waters edge on the darker coloured

sand washed by the tide. This would at least prove a firmer and smoother surface than the lighter coloured softer white sand higher up the beach, into which we would probably sink rapidly, which would inevitably result in turning the Rapide upside down with possible fatal consequences. Mediterranean waves are mere ripples in good weather compared to most UK beaches so I was confident that a successful landing could be made close to the water's edge without getting swamped.

As we approached land I suddenly caught sight of something glinting in the setting sun. It turned out to be the reflection from a large group of oil tanks. That must mean that we were getting near to some form of life which boosted my spirits significantly. Then as we drew closer I could hardly believe my good fortune for there right ahead lay a rather long black-coloured airstrip – what incredible luck!

I wasn't about to try and try and seek permission to land over the radio, even if I had been able to, but went straight in for a somewhat bumpy and undignified arrival. We had landed at the American oil base of Es Sidr! After taxiing in to the small parking apron where I had been marshalled by one of the personnel who came running out to meet our unexpected arrival, I closed both engines down, breathed an enormous sigh of relief, and we all disembarked.

To be continued in the next issue of the Bugle.....!

Remember the Saturday cinema matinees where the hero was about to be thrown over a cliff bound and gagged and you were duty bound to attend the next week's matinee...!!

GLORIOUS GARDEN PARTY

The sun shone gloriously for the whole of the afternoon (30th June), plus a huge crowd, and a dog fight to boot....!!



A delightful day out in Kent with some pretty women and contrasting shadows.



A water feature for the young'uns.



Some old timers, Gavin Dix and Brian Stevens who lives in Recife, Brazil turned up for this special day out from his boat building business.



Neil Jensen and Arthur Hill.



A panorama of the huge garden ideal for kids racing around at high speed, followed by high speed dogs.



Discussing old times.



Brian Stevens and Mrs Ball.



A least 120 people attended.