



BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT BUGLE

News from our Airport at Biggin Hill - established 2005



CLUB AND AIRPORT NEWS

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EMPTY – FIELD MYOPIA

Two aeroplanes, a Cessna and a Piper, were flying straight and level on a cross-country flight at 1500 ft AGL. Neither aeroplane was under radar contact.

Visibility conditions were seven miles in haze.

The two aeroplanes collided almost head-on. There were no survivors.

OPTICAL - DECEPTION

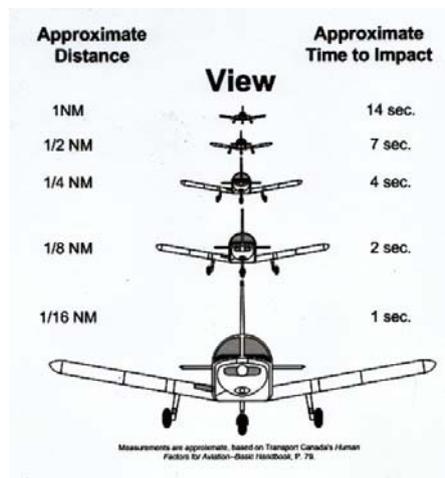


This illusion can often be seen from a high coastline, if you view this scene with good visibility, then you get the relative perspective but this scene has no horizon thereby giving a false image of the yacht.

Analysis of the two aircraft: The haze conditions produced empty-field myopia in both pilots eyes. Therefore each aeroplane

appeared smaller and more distant than it actually was.

With limited visibility, the danger did not become apparent until it was too late for evasive action.



Since the frontal area of the aeroplane profile is small, an aeroplane viewed directly from the front shows little relative movement. Hence, detection by either pilot was difficult.

Their combined closing speed was probably 240 mph which equates to 4 miles a minute, therefore each would be unseen until they were within the last mile and the last 1/2 mile would far too late to analyse what is about to happen.

A pilot who experiences empty-field myopia is a pilot who is unable to see an aircraft in the distance despite the unrestricted visibility.

To see something, the lens of the eye must be capable of physically

focusing light from the object on the retina.

To do this, the eye must be stimulated by an image.

If the eye lacks this stimulation, the lens shifts to a resting state some three to five feet away.

When the sky is featureless, as is the case with unrestricted visibility, with hazy conditions, or dark night conditions, you effectively become near-sighted when you look outside the windows as your eyes tend to resort to their natural resting state.

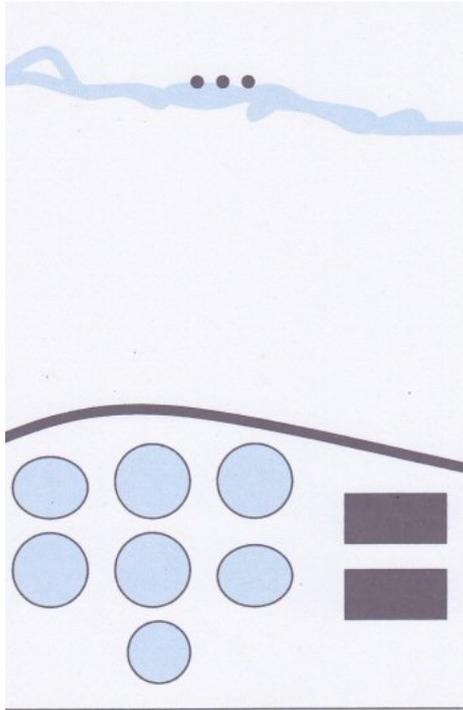
To counter empty field-myopia, it is good practice to focus quite frequently on your own aircraft wing tips. Also, when scanning, focus on distant visible objects or outlines on or near the horizon, stimulating the eyes to establish long-distance focal points.

Consider that a target (another aircraft) on a collision course appears fixed and increasing in size to the observer. Changes in size are difficult to perceive, so a pilot who observes any fixed target should first immediately alter course, then assess its direction.

AIR PROX IN CAVOK

It is amazing what is not seen during straight and level flight with wonderful weather forever. An aircraft will mysteriously appear alongside you, where did it come from?

STRUBBY IN LINCOLNSHIRE



A pre-arranged flight for a landing at RAF Strubby, Lincolnshire, we were under their control, when I spotted three specks in the distance, which promptly vanished, only to re-appear a few seconds later with a lot of noise emanating from their jet engines.



Now that was close!!

I asked Strubby if they had any fighters in the area. No Sir, came the reply! After landing I was able to describe what the pilots were wearing and they were identified as being gathered back to RAF Manby nearby.

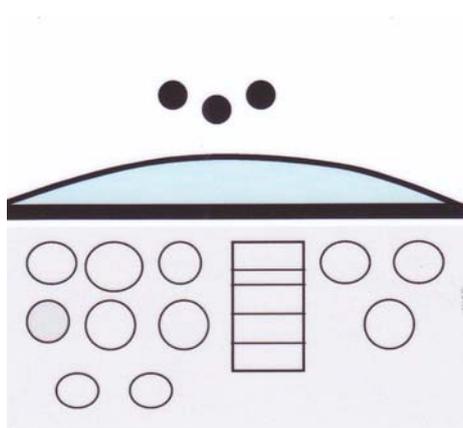
They never saw us until the moment they went under us, and weren't showing on Strubby radar.

A CLEAR DAY NEAR TOURS

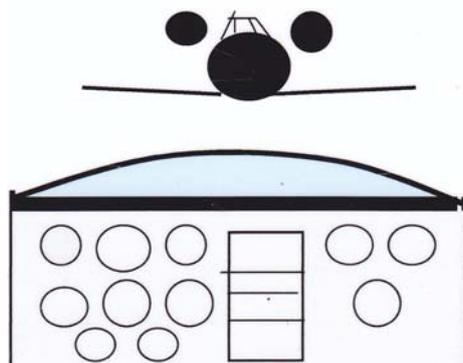
The weather over France was brilliant, excellent visibility. We started our journey from Aerospatiale factory at Tarbes with two TB10 Tobago's, one bound for Germany the other for the UK.

My German colleague suggested that we fly in formation to Toussus Le Noble (Paris) for lunch, he elected to lead.

We were somewhere near Tours flying at 2,000ft. I looked up to scan the horizon and became aware of three black spots..??



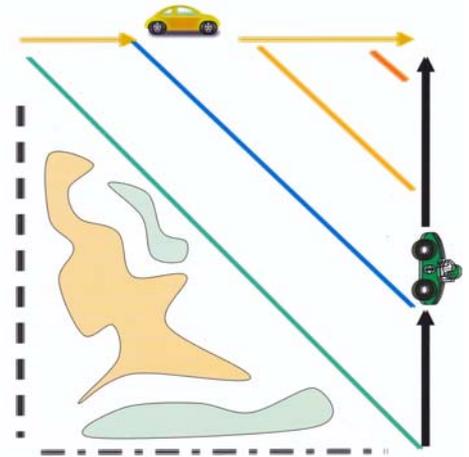
Seconds later my scrambling brain and very wide open eyes came to the conclusion that this was an aircraft as it painted a windscreen and a pair of wings and was about to pass between us, **but no!** There is no gap, **definitely going to hit my colleague**, with that I broke right and watched the bizjet smoking off into the distance.



Which by now, I recognised as an Aerospatiale Corvette Bizjet

I re-joined formation with my colleague. After landing at Toussus I went to his aircraft and asked if he saw the Corvette. He said he saw nothing..!! Saying he did see me turn away, but thought nothing more..!!

BEWARE 90deg COLLISION:



This situation is probably the worst in the air as the relative image will not appear to change in size, as each remains at the same angle to the other. This situation is just as relative on the ground e.g. an Arab driving off the desert (*his given right of way*) will collide with the man driving along a designated tarmac road (*his, given right of way*). I have witnessed many such wrecks crossing from the desert to the tarmac. Quite mad..! But, it does happen on a regular basis.

A Camel will deliberately walk in front of an oncoming vehicle because it assumes all other animals and vehicles move at the same speed as themselves, therefore no harm will befall them. If you happen to kill one of these creatures, don't hang around, leave the scene quickly. Any delay will be fatal because an Arab will appear out of the desert claiming compensation for loss of the said Camel, claiming to be the owner.

The Bugle would be grateful to hear of any exciting air-miss that **may have passed you by..!!**

FORMATION WITH GPS



Flying across Africa is a wonderful experience, especially in the old days when navigation aids couldn't (or shouldn't) be relied upon to be working. VOR's were often hit and miss, due to lack of maintenance, or no electricity to power them up.

Spurious indications would give false hope as you got nearer to the nav - aid. It became quite important not to stop map reading and learn the countryside for future navigation skills. Africa is a vast and varied landscape.

We often flew with 4 – 6 aircraft at a time for safety and convenience. If we ran into bad haze or cloud we would climb to different levels of 500ft and the leader would advise any change of heading until we became visual again.

Eventually came, GPS – whilst this was brilliant, everyone flew down the middle of the road.

Unfortunately, you could not fly in formation if you wanted to use the auto-pilot' RNAV for the day as each individual aircraft would navigate right up the back of the one in front.

We would depart in formation to altitude and the leader would set his power and ground speed. The others would form up line astern one by one at a distance of 4 miles astern of each other, ground speed being set by the leader.

Every so often the leader would give his range to destination and the others would confirm their range, plus the extra miles behind.

Toward the destination we would begin to form up again which was not easy to spot the aircraft ahead, often getting within the last mile as the GPS guided your aircraft right up the centreline – even with good weather the profile of an aircraft from behind is difficult to spot. Even though you know the range, you have to exercise your eyes, and suddenly you will have found your friend. By the same token, if another aircraft is approaching head on, be sure to ask their height, altimeter setting, the radial they are tracking and heading. Because their GPS, will guide them, straight toward you dead centre, so to speak.

A DC3 OVER THE SAHARA

Flying conditions were typically hazy over the desert when a DC3 appeared on my right side, I picked up my binoculars and could clearly see the pilots who obviously hadn't noticed me, nor over concerned about their current airspace. We gradually converged, as we both headed north over Algiers, they being a little faster than me passed ahead as I crossed behind them. All that space over Africa..!!



PATRICK TRICKER arrived at Biggin Hill in the 1960's, gracing us with his artistic talents and an

interest in aviation plus a 2CV Citroen Car which he would drive around without any doors, eccentric..!! to say the least, top class character.....

Let us leave this story for the moment as we have a surprise party for Patrick from his colleagues of **The Barn Theatre Oxted.**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY 70 YEARS



Patrick was completely surprised by the reception which was held at the Carpenters Arms, Limpsfield Chart in his honour.



The Carpenters Arms is now under new management, a little off the beaten track, worth a visit for a lunch break, or an evening meal.

.....Patrick became aware of Biggin Hill Airport in the 1950's when he was being driven by an elderly family member from Bromley, heading south toward Tunbridge Wells, where he later attended an Art College

Later on he would make his way to Biggin Hill to make some sketches on the airfield. He recalls he attended the first Air Fair in 1963. He was approaching his point of free access through the woods and bumped into Peter Webb doing the same thing, as they didn't have sufficient funds for ticketed entrance.

The following year he tried the same entrance point and got caught by 'Pipe' Roy Taylor who directed him to the ticket point.



By the next year he was established as an airfield employee and never paid for his entrance again.



This Lancaster was flown from Australia for one of the early Air Fairs 1964, with many people queuing to have a look inside. Over the years this would all



change and enthusiasts were corralled behind barriers.

The days of getting close up to the aircraft were fading each year.



The Blackburn Beverley was a large RAF Transport aircraft with many people clambering through the cavernous cargo hold.



Imagine the apparent unattended bags in the foreground, whilst the

camera person takes a simple picture, would today be misconstrued as a bomb threat, panic midst the security personnel..!!



Patrick recalls the many bars operated by the 13 flying clubs, filled to capacity; seemingly open all night 'wonderful days'.

He bumped into Mark Campbell and entered into a venture cleaning VW mobile camper units operated by Pipe and David Orme. They had 30 vehicles which needed cleaning at the end of the current holiday hire. Even JB hired one and drove it around Europe.

As well as cleaning these vehicles Patrick and Mark, (*The Mop and the Rose*). So named by Douglas eastern Gilbert in a poem he wrote, describing, Patrick's mop of hair and Marks rosy cheeks. *The Mop and the Rose*, rolled out the hose.....and so the poem went. There was more than one involved with cleaning aircraft like John Pitman (*deceased*) and Denis Cass (*vanished, whereabouts unknown*).



Percival Pembroke.



OUR PLANES ARE SECURE

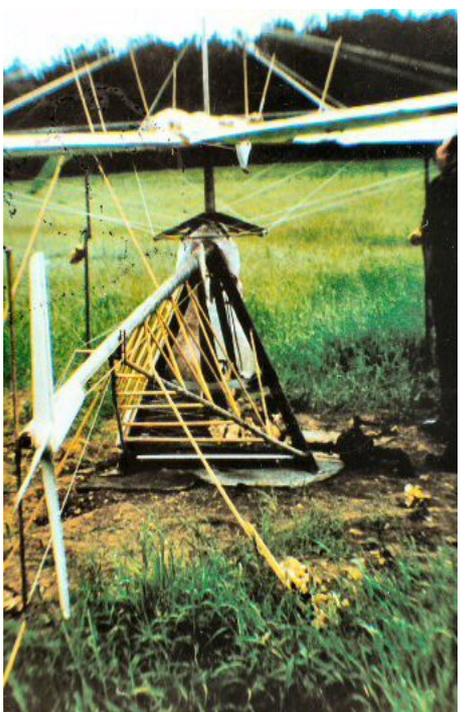


Patrick Tricker, Gary Duncan, Ken Roberts (*deceased*) Denis Cass..??
Guarding the Nations Heritage



Artwork by Patrick Tricker still adorns Shipping & Airlines Hangar.

STRANGE MYSTERY OF 1972



Two Foreign Gentleman came to Biggin Hill one day in 1972 and started construction of a man powered helicopter with a tubular fuselage to support one man who would be the power force by chain drive. They came every weekend with a couple of plastic carrier bags, worked all day and left as quietly as they came speaking to no one.

If you look above the blades, there is a toilet block which used to be along the side of the black hangar. Whilst they worked for weeks nobody touched their machine, until one night a very strong wind came to the airfield and badly damaged their work.

These two unknowns surveyed the damage, disappearing never to be seen again..!!

THE DAYS OF FAIRFLIGHT with Patrick Tricker



Wobbling down our established radial, with – if you were quick enough – a quick crosscut from the London VOR if Farnborough

hospital lights weren't visible, many a Fairflight Dove or Heron driver was relieved to find the faint glow of half a dozen torches down the side of 21 at Biggin. It didn't matter what the time of night or the weather, you would grope your way back to the hangar in total darkness and on shutting down the ever familiar voice would utter from nowhere "lights OK, were they 'ol boy". Occasionally a woolly mop of hair may have appeared behind the voice, sometimes not! Sometimes, depending upon its serviceability or all up weight with the contents of Patrick's 'house' within, the very dim glimmer of a pair of Deux Chevaux headlights may emerge across the apron. This would be Tricker, ever faithful, always there and with an uncanny sixth sense of when things were going to happen in days when mobile phones hadn't reached the world – and certainly not Fairflight's mission control. Patrick is a chap of few words, but those he has are always thoughtful, kind, well considered and infinitely easier to understand than his written communication which is – as many will know – a very special combination of words and cryptic symbols that can be perplexing to talented artist, many a note or instruction would be left in Patrick's own unique hieroglyphics and it is mildly surprising that Barcelona was not mistaken for Bratislava more often! One of Patrick's major skills in those happy days was as "Master Chick Handler". On many a long flight to the exotic spots as far flung as northern Africa or many eastern European ports, Patrick would emerge from a cloud of dust and spaghetti of plastic tubes with tears in his eyes to proclaim that he had 'lost one'. say the least to the uninitiated! At a rate of one in what was sometimes in the region of tens of thousands not a bad success rate! (On occasion it may actually be possible that more Heron roof hatches were lost to the

bottom of the Aegean Sea than chicks in his vigilance to protect his cargo!). G.S



FLYING DAY OLD CHICKS

Special attention was needed during these flights to keep this precious cargo, oxygenated, ventilated (cooling). These little beings were prone to farting a lot as they climbed to altitude permutating the cabin with a foul smell.

The pilots froze up front whilst Patrick down in the fuselage was baking amidst a cloud of fine dust, as he rotated the boxes of chickens giving them a mist of water and making sure they are well ventilated, not too cold, nor too hot.

PATRICK'S MOBILE HOUSE



The perfect vehicle for a soft living style, designed for economy, trekking across Africa, could be disassembled for crossing rivers using, local Afrikaan porters, piece by piece. Making sure you had all the said vehicle before paying the so called headman of his troop.

FYING AT SURREY & KENT



Surrey and Kent one of the largest clubs operating at Biggin Hill from the 60's onward. S & K operated a variety of different aircraft, including the famous Aircoupe above which was the beginning of Patrick's flying training career. This aircraft had a unique tin-can doink..! as it landed on the hard runway. He also flew the Chipmunk, Auster, Tiger Moth, RF4 and RF5 Fournier aircraft and Auster Aiglet.

Patrick is a man of 'Talent' well travelled with a keen interest of his surroundings.

THE BARN THEATRE OXTED



According to Patrick the Barn Theatre merged into his life becoming a well respected member (not an actor) with necessary talent of scenery background skills.

The interior, (seating) is quite comfortable with the Stage

Director's table in the centre of the seating.



The birthday party continued late into the night with Patrick completely dumfounded by his surprise.

SOME FLEETING IMAGES



A 'gentleman's smoking evening'



A 'gentleman's drinking evening'