



# BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT BUGLE

News from our Airport at Biggin Hill - established 2005



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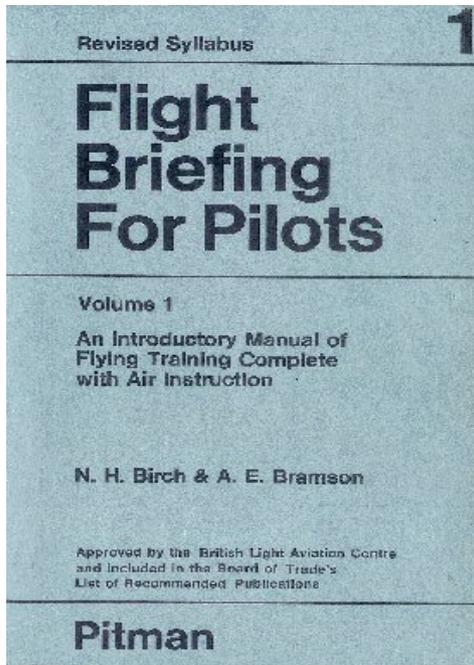
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## ALAN 'BUNNY' BRAMSON



As reported previously in the newsletter Alan has passed away. He was a Co-author of the famous series of *Flight Briefing For Pilots* one of the earliest civil flight manuals available in the UK.



These were written and published in conjunction with Neville Birch, who would become a lifetime friend from this point in time (*These manuals 1-2-3-4 were first published in the 1960's and sold in great numbers*). In 1942 Alan was accepted for pilot training, his initial ground school was in Torquay and some flying training at Reading. Further flight training would be completed in the USA at Terrell, Texas at No1 British Flying Training School an RAF unit staffed by American Instructors following a British syllabus. He was recommended for single engine fighters, but on his return to the UK, the shortage of flying instructors and Alan's previous experience as an Engineering Instructor at Halton, led to his selection for the Flying Instructor Course at RAF Woodley. In 1955 he was invited to join the Panel of Examiners, an unpaid spare time job testing flying instructors on the behalf of the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators and later the Civil Aviation Authority. In 1973 he was elected Chairman of the Panel of Examiners, an honorary post he held for ten years. Around this time he co-founded with Bert Allam the No1 BFTS Association, maintaining the links with Texas he held so dear. Those near to Alan will recall his sense of humour. If you were wearing a suit, he might say, "That's a nice material; you should have it made into a suit sometime". Alan was the author of 22 aviation books, 800 magazine articles, Fellow of the Royal

Aeronautical Society, Member of the British Academy of Experts of the British Association of Aviation Consultants and Liveryman of the Guild of Air pilots and Air Navigators.

### 29 / 11 POSSIBLE CLOSURE

Mis-information developed into a rumour that this runway at Biggin Hill would be closed due to the erection of a new hangar on the south side of the airfield as the 'runway' will become too close to this new structure. Huh! Believe this, you'll believe anything.



The white line in the picture above represents the closeness of peoples houses living near Yao in Japan (165ft from the runway edge)



where they live in harmony with their environment.

They live in crowded cities and towns, so what is the problem of a busy airport just over the fence!

Biggin Hill's airport management have assured the Bugle there is no intention of closing this runway in the medium or to long term, and especially not as a result of any new hangar construction, and in particular these buildings would not be erected in contravention of runway safety.



Artists impression of the new development on the former site of EFG, Cabair, and Pilots Pals.

### **MISHAP IN THE DARKNESS**

A largish corporate jet aircraft was being towed by a tug which in turn was being guided by a 'Follow Me' vehicle in the still of the night which failed to follow the route normally followed by aircraft. There followed a collision with the ILS localiser aerial with the Port wing rendering this facility out of service and some expensive repair work required to the aircraft.

Oops!!!

### **PLUNGED INTO DARKNESS**

During construction work at this same airfield an excavating machine managed to dig up the main electricity cable, oh dear, we do not appear to be doing very well at this well known airfield in Kent. The name escapes me for the moment. *I will remember one day!*

### **DAMAGED PLANE AT FIJI**

Not the plane from Biggin Hill (*oops, I have given away that airfield in Kent*). However, this is a delightful story from the *Fiji Times* as published, following the preceding incident with the ILS.

### **Damaged plane arrives at Nausori, Thursday October 16<sup>th</sup>.**

An Air Fiji aircraft crashed into a building shortly after landing in Taveuni should resume operation soon, says Operations Manager Air Fiji Drauna Waqasokolala. PC 285 was flown back to the Nausori Airport on Wednesday after Civil

Aviation Authority of Fiji completed their checks. Mr Waqasokolala said the Y12 15 seater will only resume service flights when a full report to determine the cause of the crash was established. He said Air Fiji was not aware on what caused the mishap at this stage, but were working closely with and CAAFI regulators to reach a finding. It was reported nine passengers escaped unharmed when the aircraft crashed into a Pacific Sun Office, after failing to stop at its regular place. PC 285 left Labasa at about 8am on Sunday and arrived half an hour later at Matei airport. It was reported CAAFI'S aerodrome section was not notified of the crash which indicated there was a possible problem with either the pilot or the aircraft. CAAFI aerodrome section reportedly said they would only be alerted if it had something to do with the tarmac.

### ***Take a moment to read the above article once more. (editor).***

It would appear the aircraft has continued flying from airport to airport. Let's hope it doesn't do a wheels up, because the tarmac will be damaged, and will have to be reported to the CAAFI – damn!



This is how a crashed Y12 looks !

I must check my flight details for my Pacific holiday – *this aircraft seems to have a good survival rate.* Further to this report, it has been published that this airline was under some cloud after it grounded all its aircraft over what it said were 'technical' issues. *Ah!, I am beginning to get the drift of what possibly, could have happened.*

**PPL GOES BOOTLEGGING with the RAF.** This story is written by Peter, Lord of Abbots-Hay, describing a 3 hour sortie in a VC10 Tanker, over the North Sea.

It started with a telephone call from the PA to Group Captain Jon Lamont, O/C RAF Brize Norton. Would I like to visit the station for a 'tanking' sortie as the guest of the Group Captain? It didn't take more than a second to say: "Yes, please". I had first met Jon Lamont when he was a Wing Commander and O/C 30 Sqn at RAF Lyneham. I had flown in from Biggin Hill to deliver some philatelic covers for one of the 30 Sqn Hercules to fly for our RAFA fund raising. From that first encounter I formed a firm friendship with him, and on many occasions his squadron helped our fund raising efforts. In fact during the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of 30 Sqn, Jon and his squadron raised £30,000 for charity. Jon is a busy man; Brize Norton has 4,500 personnel and four squadrons. It is the biggest RAF base in the world. Jon Lamont is in overall charge and works virtually 7 days a week. I was taken first to 216 Squadron to meet Wing Commander Rad Greene. Rad, a former Vulcan captain, had just returned from the Gulf. For the next hour, he gave me a short briefing on his squadron. 216 was formed in 1917 and today has nine VC-10 aircraft with sixteen crews. The squadron strength is 400. During the Gulf War they flew 150 hours over 30 days dispensing 7.5 million tons of fuel. Their VC-10s now have JTIDS screens, giving a birds-eye view of all aerial activity for hundreds of miles, and they also have the secure voice contact on board. (Peter and VC-10 tanker).



One hour later we meet Wing Commander Malcolm Brecht O/C 99 Squadron. Malcolm was formerly a pilot in 32 (the Royal) Sqn at RAF Benson and Northolt. Malcolm introduced me to Sqn Ldr Danny Jacobs, who took me out to

board the RAF's first C-17 Globemaster III. 99 Sqn was reformed in 2001 with the arrival of the Boeing Globemaster. This is an aircraft of truly astonishing proportions, its four P&W fanjets each produce more than 40,000 lb of thrust and it weighs 90 tons. It can land an 80 ton payload on a 3,000-foot runway, and it will accommodate an Abrams tank and seat 104 personnel. It cruises at Mach .76, has a range of 5,000 miles, and is operated by a crew of three, pilot, co-pilot, and loadmaster.



I walked into the cavernous interior of this aircraft and climbed up the short stairs onto the flight deck. Gone were the dials and switches of the VC-10. Sqn Ldr Jacobs ran me through the controls of this fly-by-wire giant and told me they could fly hands-off to a decision height of 100ft. All too soon I had to get off and was taken to 101 Squadron. Every day over the North Sea their VC-10K III tankers are practicing and refining the art of air to air refueling. Our captain was Fl Lt Dave Mutty, a veteran of these aircraft; second pilot was Fl Lt Gavin Baker, navigator Gp Capt Jon Lamont, engineers Bob O'Hara, Phil King and Fl Sgt Kyle, loadmaster Sgt Adam Mimpres. The captain briefed us that we could expect over a three hour period to fuel ten fighters. After an in-depth briefing we were taken out to the VC-10, whose flight deck looked comfortingly familiar after the Globemaster. Typically, Tornados will take two to three tons each over a five-minute period. During that time they fly in very close formation with the VC10, normally at around FL180 – FL200. The VC10 usually has an



an all-up weight of 140 tons but can go as high as 152 tons. We could expect to give away close on 20 tons of fuel. We started to taxi at 13.50 hrs and were to return at 17.10 hrs – some 3 hrs 20 minutes of demanding flying, much of it in close formation. Initially we climbed to FL100, where the engineer takes over the throttles at his post behind the co-pilot. From then, the captain and second pilot do not touch the throttles. In IMC we continued to climb to our station in sector 4 over the North Sea.

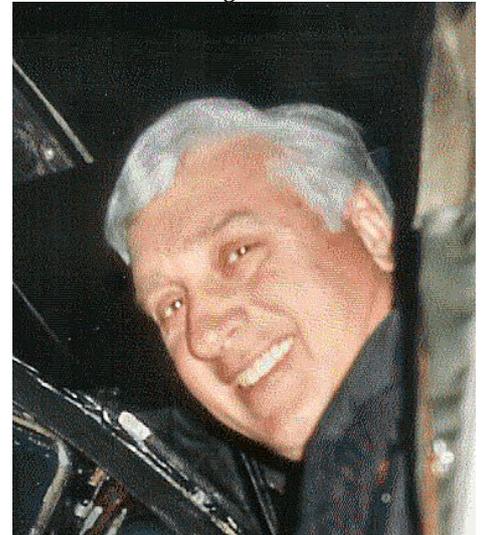
#### *First customers ....*

Our first contact was with two Tornado F3s with the call sign 'Gamecock'. Each 45-mile leg of our refueling pattern takes about five minutes, with a fighter taking fuel all the way, including in turns. Absolute concentration is called for, with fantastic teamwork between the crews. Sometimes aircraft cancel, normally due to bad weather. However, you also get the occasional 'bootleg', an aircraft that is en-route and a little low on fuel, perhaps returning from a NATO exercise. During our flight, NATO exercise *Clean Hunter* was going on over Belgium and Holland. We refueled bootleg fighters as and when they arrived, but when the time came to return to Brize Norton we had one small problem – we still had three tons too much fuel left, because of the cancellation of a rendezvous with two GR4s with the call sign 'Fang'. It was decided to set up an orbit at 4,000 feet north-east of Brize Norton to burn off the fuel. The alternative – rarely used – is to jettison the excess fuel over the sea. At 1700 hrs we touched down at Brize Norton and arrived back at our parking bay, at 1710 pm. For me it was a tiring and exhilarating

and I wasn't doing the work! For me, it was a rare experience; for the crew it was all going to happen again the next day. My endearing memory is of the sheer professionalism of all I met. They are dedicated men and women who daily, in the skies above us, serve the great British public very well, perhaps much better than they get credit for.



*Peter, Lord of Abbots-Hay is an AOPA member and Liveryman of the Guild of Pilots and Air Navigators.*



#### **NO NEED FOR H/V JACKETS**

At this airfield, because you can see very clearly what you will hit, if you get it wrong. Houses near the runway will get your utmost attention whilst landing and departing, even the casual pedestrian strolling over your right of way – he will casually avoid you



Oh look, is that a Y12 on the apron?

## AIRFIELD PERSONALITIES



Tony Habgood came to the airfield in 1978 and started working for Cobaircraft learning the art of working with old aircraft formed from wood alone, and others that consisted of wood and metal tubing which were then covered with Irish Linen, today the material is nylon based and much stronger. By the same token the glues used in the old days have been superseded by glues that will last ten years or more. Working with this type of construction was painstakingly slow requiring a keen eye and patience, especially the glues, which only cured at a certain pace. This required some forethought as to the next stage, during a rebuild of these wooden framed aircraft so as to keep the scheduled rebuild flowing smoothly. Pieces of wood had to be carefully sawn, sanded to the correct dimensions and angles so as to be fitted in position accordingly and glued the next day, and so on. During this period Tony developed his interest in learning to fly as well as his initial goal to become an aircraft engineer. Tony gained his PPL in 1986 on single and multi engine aircraft. In 1989 he gained his Engine and Airframe Licences. Tony joined Shipping and Airlines soon afterwards and became their Hangar Forman. Tony married Lorna in 1987 and they have three children, Emily, Joshua and Rachael. Tony joined the ranks, of the *'severe engine failure club'* recently whilst flying a *'Civilian' coupe*. He was able to

land on the airfield. This unique aircraft is the only surviving one of five, which were built by a company near Hull in the late 20's. They were constructed with metal tubing and covered in plywood and with an enclosed cabin were quite revolutionary, giving comfort and warmth from the open cockpits of the day with good visibility all round, except straight forward.



Its registration was G-ABNT and was affectionately nick named *'Bunty'*. Its log book showed, flights to Belgium in those far off heady days of aviation, propelled along with a *'Genet'* 5 cylinder



radial engine running on 80 octane the aircraft being refueled at the local garage prior to flight.. The four preceding aircraft were powered by 4 cylinder horizontal engines of 75HP. Original sale price was only £650. This aircraft was purchased for the princely sum of £350. The owner lived near Camarthen in Wales, using Pendine Sands for his landing site. The aircraft had folding wings and would be stored behind his house in a shed after flying. The Civilian Aircraft Company would fail in the 30's. The growing tensions within Europe toward 1939 led to this aircraft being dismantled and stored in the attic of the owners business. Where it remained until 1971, whence it was recovered to Biggin Hill in a dilapidated state, but intact except for the wheels, which had corroded beyond repair or reconstruction. A pair of motorcycle wheels would be adapted, including brakes of which

there were none previously. Tony was involved in the rebuild of this flying machine for many hours. It featured a unique luggage locker which extended the length of the fuselage held in place by six over-centre clips. An evening dress could be laid out evenly, atop a gentleman's evening suit, and retrieved without a crease at the journey's end. Unlike your modern aircraft, within which, the locker is the size of a school satchel, suitable only for a pair of scruffy jeans and a previously worn sweaty 'T' shirt. Under wear and shoes, would be worn whilst travelling, Yuk! The enclosed cockpit was elegantly furnished with a comprehensive set of flight instruments for the time. The passenger seat was staggered rearward and beside the pilot, allowing considerable comfort.



## SHADY ACTIVISTS SPOTTED

These two shady looking pilot types were captured on film recently preparing for flight, in a rather shady aircraft, without hi-viz jackets with the sun behind them.



At the time of going to print, their identities remain anonymous as does the identity of the aircraft. How they managed to get on the airfield unobserved, is also a mystery, considering the security cameras strategically placed nearby out of sight of the onlooker. Hmm!