



BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT BUGLE

News from our Airport at Biggin Hill - established 2005



CLUB AND AIRPORT NEWS

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HISTORY MPFC 1966 – 2016



2014 aviation history is continuing to develop. These two enthusiasts, assembled and painted these model aircraft from one kit each in 35 minutes. Says a lot for their superb building skills at a MPFC gathering at Biggin Hill Airport



A superb model of the Grumman 180HP. Duly registered **G-MPFC**

There were some important events that occurred in 1966. England won the World Cup :it was the 1000th anniversary of the Battle of

Hastings, Laker Airways was founded: The Kray twins shot George Cornell in the Blind Beggar Pub in London's East End., and some innovative police officers took some tentative steps into the world of general aviation by forming the Metropolitan Police Flying Club (MPFC). In the 50 years since, unlike the England Football side, the MPFC has gone from strength to strength.

The formation of the Metropolitan Police Flying Club was officially held on the 8th of November 1966 in room 209N when over 100 persons were present when the MPAA Secretary is quoted as saying "You will never get this off the ground, it is too expensive" – Always a challenge to a Met officer, usually associated with large claims for overtime!

The meeting had been called following the visit of PCs. Jack Langley (Sunbury 'T' Division) and Tony North (Shepperton Thames Division) to Inspector Arthur Doughty, a Traffic Patrol at Hampton Garage.

Arthur was known as an aircraft enthusiast and experienced glider pilot. In 1951 he had raised the subject of forming a gliding club at a Divisional Sports Meeting, but was reminded that the Commissioner had issued an instruction banning all police

officers from taking part in dangerous sport and pastimes!

Jack Langley was an ex-RAF pilot who had flown Dakotas in South East Asia during World War II, on being demobed; he worked for a while as an Instructor with Airwork, but joined the Buckingham Constabulary and then transferred to the Met.

Tony North, as far as it was known had no previous "air" experience, merely wanting a change from water to air.

Their first step was to ascertain what support there was within the Force. A notice was published in Police Orders and over 500 leaflets were distributed. The returns showed that there was a wealth of experience ranging from ex-service personnel with several hundred hours to those with no experience, but very interested in flying.

It was at that meeting Chief Superintendent Alec Flett DFC, of "X" Division, an ex RAF Navigator, was selected as the first Chairman. Initially two Flying Sections and a Gliding Section were envisaged, one at Biggin Hill and the other at White Waltham.



The Biggin Hill Section had a chequered history, Biggin Hill Section was really due to a P.C. at Croydon Police Station, Mick Ronayne who was a police constable on 12 Beat, or should have been. On one occasion a Duty Officer discovered him away from his beat doing aerobatics at 6,000 feet over Hastings in his Tiger Moth!

Mick started the County Flying Club in a derelict War World II pre-fabricated building at Biggin Hill. His only aircraft was the Tiger Moth, until it was modified after a badly adjudged and uninsured attempt to fly through a closed hangar at the end of Runway 29.

John Parker was a Traffic Patrol officer at Thornton Heath Garage and had walked the beat with Mick at Croydon. John decided to lease a Condor from the manufacturers Rollason at Redhill Aerodrome. It was a fabric covered, low wing – tail dragger with special yaw characteristics on rotation. This in fact was the real start of the M.P.F.C. Biggin Hill Section.

At that time the hire rate was £3.10s. (£3.50 decimal) per hour. Derek Trewin completed his PPL, but Claude Wakeman (Surrey Constabulary) did not. Things came to a head following financial difficulties and the Club was forced to seek new pastures and became associated with Air Touring Club. It had a nice brick building, a bar and more importantly toilets.



Air Touring was equipped with a Rallye aircraft the most used the 880B. To check fuel levels there was a glass tube on the cockpit side panel. Due to its non-stallable

characteristic, it was soon known as the “metal parachute”.

The Western Section at White Waltham on the 4th.January 1967 made a visit to Redhill and through the good offices of Norman Jones, of Rollason Aircraft, the lease of 2 brand new Rollason (Druiene) Condors was agreed. Unfortunately there was a delay of several months between the first and second aircraft being available. On the 21st January 1967, following a trial flight, the hire of a Jodel was agreed.



The Jodel 120 was a nice aircraft to fly..

On the 4th March 1967, the Western Section took delivery of their first Condor “G-AVAW”



until later in the month it was transferred to Biggin Hill Section. A Tri-Traveller “G-ARAR” duly replaced the Jodel, until the summer when it was replaced by Condor “AVAW” by now the Western Section had its own Instructor. It purchased a Colt “G-ARJC” for the sum of £1500 raised by member’s loans. Later in 1971, the Western Section decided to bring operations closer to London and became affiliated to the Denham Flying Training School.

1975 saw the formation of a temporary 3rd Section at Stapleford, named as “The Northern Section”,

but it had a short life when the joint owners of the aircraft formed a separate organisation.

Soon the M.P.F.C. Biggin Section, could boast over 30 members who regularly attended functions and meetings. The bank balance at that time was £379 in the Annual Accounts. John Warwicker became CFI of the MPFC at Biggin Hill in Sportair Flying Club at Biggin had a full range of the Robin type from the Petite Prince to the 180 Regent. The M.P.F.C. took full advantage of becoming Associated Members and full touring use was made of the Robins. As a result of a liaison between the Met and the French Police Association “Des Pilotes de la Police De L’Air”, in 1973 an annual competition was started leading to visiting aerodromes all over France including such places as Rennes, Toulouse, Montpellier and Aix Le Milles (military). On many occasions there would be 5 aircraft from Biggin Hill as well as others from the Western Section (Denham) and Northern Section (Stapleford) representing the Met.

FLASH BACK 1969 Ed... JB



How many can remember the arrival of Mira Slovak at Biggin Hill for the 1969 Airshow in his RF4 Founier which he had flown

across the Atlantic via Greenland, Iceland etc;



His wings were filled with table tennis balls to assist flotation in the event of a forced sea ditching. Let us continue the original story before we get lost.

The 27th. July 1971 saw the first National Police Air Rally (a one day event) organised by the White Waltham Section, the brainchild of P.C.Ken Eley, Warrant Officer at Brentford Magistrates Court.

Biggin Hill Section organised their first POLAIR at Biggin Hill in 1977, the Navigation exercise was won by a WPC from Bedfordshire who had forgot to take the aerial photographs with her.

It was around this time that Customs and Excise raided Air Touring in connection with alleged import duties and tax irregularities, this led to the owners suspecting (wrongly) that the MPFC had something to do with it and the Club had to find other premises. This time it was the then Civil Service Flying Club, but in time the owners "took off", luckily however, the Civil Air Flying Club arose out of the ashes. History was to repeat itself in 2006 when the Civil Air Flying Club went into liquidation, causing some uncertainty about accommodation for the club, thankfully now resolved.

In 1979 under the auspices of CFI John Warwick, the Biggin Hill Section purchased their first aircraft, a Cessna 150J – G-AWTJ.

A Cessna 152 Aerobat with a personalised G-MPBH (G- Met Police Biggin Hill) later joined the fleet. Many members current and former have fond memories of circuit bashing in 'TJ' and 'BH'. This was followed by the leasing of a Warrior II G-SOBI, now coincidentally with Cleveland Police Flying Club. CFI's during this period were Colin Nielson Deputy Chief Pilot Gold Air) and Steve Gwillaim, ably assisted by Norman Phillips.

Fifteen years ago the club was able to purchase an Archer II G-BYKL. 'KL' served the club very well as a tourer and trainer until 2005.



The engine component times were about to expire, she was 25 years old and a decision was taken to source a newer aircraft. So a three-year-old Piper Archer III was acquired from Florida USA. Its purchase was possible because of some very shrewd financial management of the club by the Treasurer Dave McConnachie and the generous assistance of the



Metropolitan Police Athletic Association (MPAA), which was recognised, in the personalised registration G-MPAA. A ferry pilot flew G-MPAA from Florida to Biggin Hill in June 2005.

AA was sold in November 2011 and then we purchased an AA5



Tiger from John Richardson, this aircraft was already in Shipping & Airlines Hangar. (Feb 2012). In July 2013 she had a prop strike at Bembridge IOW and this wrote her off. We purchased the write-off and Airtime at Bournemouth rebuilt her and resprayed. We got hold of G-MPFC and reregistered. She returned to Biggin Hill in December in 2013.

There have been numerous other members over the years that have contributed significantly to the club's success, too many to mention except for one. Ray Chudley has been active an member of the club for 46 years. He has represented the club at numerous rallies and events and although no longer flying, still contributes to the management of the club, attending every committee meeting and participating in other club activities. He has been at the heart of the planning committee for POLAIR 2006. Thank you Ray for your loyalty to the club over many years!

The club now accepts non-affiliated members, so if you are reading this and would like to fly a beautiful Grumman AA5, give us a call



Marcos Bass CFI left in 2012 and Corina Shaughnessy, became the current CFI.



On demob in 1948 I joined the MET, and in 1970 resumed my interest in flying, joining the MPFC. I managed to solo in 8 hours and spent the last 2 hours for my PPL on a trip to Le Touquet.

I represented the MPFC at the first POLAIR at Shoreham and organised the first one at Biggin Hill, Attended 14 Police de'Lair Rallies.

Over 30 years I flew 28 types of aircraft including the oldest 'Tiger Moth', an Aero Space Auto Gyro and even successfully landed the Europa 2 Goodyear Airship at Leavesdon after a 30 minute Final Approach. I gained an International Competitors Licence and entered 3 Isle of Man Air Races with Humphrey Bishop. We actually won the treasure Hunt, IN A CAR!

Even luckier I was invited to Filton to board Concorde 02 which later found me in the jump seat of a French Concorde being shown how the nose operated and a Champagne lunch in mid Atlantic, enroute to Paris. Helicopters, I have flown night operations over Central London with Special Branch in the Hughes 300 and 500 versions, out of Battersea Heliport In a SN67 up front with the pilot to a North Sea oil rig in a Force 8 gale, landing on what appeared to be a Table Tennis bat, took some doing.

It also helps to know the right people. As a weekend guest of the Wing Commander of 43 Squadron at Leuchars on their return from the Gulf war, I was photographed "bone domed" in his Tornado 3. Likewise I found myself sailing

up the Solent on board the US carrier JFK sitting in the seat of a fully armed, F18 being warned not to touch any buttons or I would start World War 3!!

Now after 38 years of Type 2 Diabetes it has taken its toll and time for things a bit different and less exciting. After much web searching I settled for low hours secondhand (one careful lady owner) USA Jet 3, metallic blue with grey leather upholstery. Real fly-by-wire, a miniature joystick situated on the end of the right hand armrest, controls direction as well as power through the powerful twin motors, Pull hard on the stick retards the port motor and advances the starboard resulting in very smart turns. Hold it too long and the machine spins or ground loops, it climbs at 8.deg angle and descends likewise.

To assist me in this, the Surrey County Council have constructed a Sea Harrier type ramp in my drive,.

Whilst I can possibly demonstrate my new machine at Farnborough, I am afraid Biggin Hill is beyond the range of my new electric chair.

Ray Chudley.....



THE CHUDLEY BIOGRAPHY:

My flying started in in 1944 (wartime) at the ripe old age of 17 1/2 as a volunteer paratrooper, the first flight of many, in a doorless RAF C47 Dakota, followed by ballooning under a captive barrage balloon at the end of a very thin cable at 700 feet. Then followed by many more in 4 engined Halifax's , Mark III, V's and IX's.

Most frightening, two flights in the plywood troop carrying Horsa gliders towed by a Halifax, in the event of a failed take-off by the Halifax, the glider lands on the tug.



Just consider your harsh opinions of the Horsa Glider, all its landings were a positive event, even startling many Germans. Ed: