



# BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT BUGLE

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



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## YOUR PILOTS CERTIFICATE

First of all, read the flying manual thoroughly. Next gain some flying practice with regard to the handling of the aircraft, becoming confident with taxiing procedures to get to the runway for take-off. Line up the aircraft carefully with the runway centre line, apply full power and shortly afterwards you are airborne. You now have the problem of landing. Having studied the procedures from the manual your first attempt at landing is successful. After several sorties you are able to take-off and land quite comfortably and will venture a little further from the field, finding your way back quite easily. The detail of the landscape from the air is quite spectacular and particular areas are easily recognised with everything falling into place with a straight in approach to land with no other aircraft visible, your approach is perfect, the landing is fine, bit bumpy, but OK. It is now time to start some cross country flying to another airfield. A new day dawns, you have some time to spare so you set yourself up for a cross country flight to another airfield. With your flight plan you depart the local airfield to fly a leg that will take 30 minutes to complete, which seems to be taking a long time as the countryside glides slowly beneath your flight path. Eventually your destination airfield appears in the distance. You are set up for a straight in approach to land. After a successful landing you turn around and return to your home airfield. Visiting your local

pub afterwards where you are able to talk to other pilots, who are amazed at your achievements over a short period of training. You explain that practice makes perfect as you down a well earned pint. After several more cross country flights including flights across America and Europe, even places like Charles De Gaulle Airport and Marseille are under your belt, and five different types of aircraft you are able to fly confidently ranging from speeds as low as 100 knots to 360 knots indicated airspeeds. During your next visit to your local pub, discussing your achievements, you mention that you will be receiving your '**Flight Certificate**' next week. A disgruntled pilot who has spent much money on flying, chirps in and says, **'how come you have this much experience in such a short space of time considering the bad weather we have been experiencing at the airfield recently?'** You explain that you have experienced no such problems during your flying program and you are able to fly safely. ***Disgruntled Pilot downs his pint and leaves the pub frothing at the mouth,*** before you have time to explain that you are only a laptop pilot and all your cross country flying etc., were achieved on '**Google Earth Flight Simulator**' ***brilliant, absolutely brilliant,*** it's the only way to fly, absolutely safe, even after several pints. The biggest problem, is getting the car home safely from the pub and setting up another safe cross country flight. One day, all pilots

will be trained by this method. ***Another pint please barman....!!***

## A GOLDEN RAINBOW 2003



Five years have elapsed since this magnificent sight was brought to our attention by Pamela Elles, who was busily playing the fruit machine for the elusive pot of gold. Which is as we all know, is only found at the end of the rainbow. She continued playing, despite this colourful scene, outside the Pilots Pals Bar.



**COULD THIS, BE AN OMEN ?**  
Following the demolition of the Pilots Pals Bar on the afternoon of the 8<sup>th</sup> September 2008, this golden rainbow re-appeared the next evening revealing the elusive 'Pot of Gold' to be beneath the floorboards, ***strange indeed ...!!***



Our freelance photographer wishes to remain anonymous for fear of reprisals, from the occult, and the alleged vanishing of the '*pot of gold*'.

### **THE 39<sup>th</sup> MALTA AIR RALLY**

This first Rally was held at Hal-Far airfield way back in October 1969. Since the closure of Hal-Far it moved to Luqa airport. Over the years several pilots from Biggin Hill have attended the Malta Air Rally, some more than once. It has proved to be a popular event over the years despite flying all that way (1200nm) for a one off dinner and presentation evening on a lonely rock in the Mediterranean. It still suffers from officialdom at some Italian airports (*particularly over the last couple of years with the political taxes imposed within Italy, which probably causes some resentment toward the Rally Competitors*) and fuel needs to be pre-ordered despite the fact that it is published as available. Apart from these minor setbacks the experience of the Malta Rally is great.

### **G-ASKT TO MALTA**



Two aircraft departed from Biggin this year. G-ASKT (PA 28) pictured above crewed by Terry Herbert, Derek Herbert and Steve Ellis set off on the Saturday (2<sup>nd</sup> Aug) but were forced to turn back due to inclement weather. It would be Monday (4<sup>th</sup> Aug) before they would get going. (*After all it is a Rally, not a race, safety is paramount*) Having achieved our first leg to Toussus Le Noble, we are able to refuel and set course for St Etienne toward improving weather. From St Etienne we set course for Cannes Mandelieu where the weather was CAVOK. Time and daylight were in our favour as we head to Ajaccio in

Corsica. Following a very restful night in Ajaccio we arose to a temperature of 33 C. We take-off for Cagliari in Sardinia. After some confusion over payment of fuel we depart for Palermo a nice aifield on the N.W corner of Sicily.



This is our final approach at Palermo, only to be greeted by fuel availability?? We are learning fast about requesting fuel in advance of the intended flight and subsequent landing which leads you straight to intolerable abuse for not having landing permission. '*But we have a flight plan*'. Not enough! '*You should have applied for landing clearance*'. So much, for the simplicity, of ICAO regulations. We spend only two days in Malta due to the aborted departure date. However, we have learned and requested PPR for our return journey home via Palermo. This time we were greeted with open arms, refueled without trouble and departed for Olbia on the N.E corner of Sardinia. Two and a half hours over water. Departing Olbia



showing a vast improvement of the road networks in Sardinia which had remained somewhat retarded throughout the preceding years. Heading north toward Cannes the weather is beautiful with a deep blue sea gliding by beneath us. Arriving at Mandelieu we were given a wind speed of 270 degrees gusting 15 / 20 knots. Note the drift

angle as we approach runway 35.



A successful landing, we set course for Vichy which transpired was, or is closed on Saturdays, we diverted to Clermont Ferrand for fuel. Departed for the UK where the weather proved to be almost as bad as when we left. We were forced to night stop at Lydd. Steve headed for Ashford to catch a train as he had to get to work the next day. Terry and Derek spent the night in a local hotel and sunk a few well deserved pints of Ale. The next day was fine as we approach finals at Biggin Hill. Would we do it again ? Yes.



**G-OPAG EN-ROUTE MALTA**



The second aircraft to leave Biggin Hill for the Malta Rally was a Seneca I crewed by Alan Lavender, his wife Sarah, son Charlie and Mark Norton. Pictured here at Lyon Bron, in France. They had a good trip for this part of their journey and confidently set course for Ajaccio. (*No problem, done it before*). However, having arrived safely at Ajaccio, they would find themselves on the wrong side of the barrier and barred from getting airside to their aircraft for departure to Malta. This seems to

be the run of the mill for Rally Competitors. They were surrounded by police demanding to see all documentation. This resulted in some resentment and much confusion as they did not appear to understand, or did not want to understand that the paper work was in fact valid. The situation was resolved and we departed for Malta, arriving for a night landing at Luqa. Only to find that having spent lots of money to complete



the course we were disqualified from the results because we had arrived late?? However we were transported to the Hotel Carinthia for the evening banquet, for which we were not disqualified. The next day dawned sunny and bright as we pose with our Rally Guide (Liz Vella) – Sarah, Alan, Charlie, Mark and Liz. We are sure from this picture that Mark is over 7 feet tall, as the aircraft is only 6 feet.



On the return journey to the UK we decided to land at Figari in the south of Corsica. This would prove to be the best decision ever.



The approach was perfect, we were greeted with wonderful hospitality compared to the abuse we received

at Ajaccio for getting on the wrong side of the barrier. (*We still don't understand how it happened*).

We became privileged guests and were offered accommodation in a wonderful place, Villa Conti, run by *two very nice chaps*. Look it up on the internet, it is, and was a very nice picturesque place '*Sud Corse*'



Next year is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Malta Rally and the organisers should study the route in relation to the political aggravation which is evident along the route for an event that has become famous within Europe and is getting more expensive for the competitors. They may, divert elsewhere !

### **THE BRIDE AT BIGGIN HILL**



Joanna Willis pictured at Biggin Hill on the 19<sup>th</sup> September with the helicopter in the background which will fly her to Penshurst Place for her marriage to Damon Pelling. Her pilot for this short journey was the 'world famous' Helicopter Display Pilot Dennis Kenyon. He made a promise to Joanna way back in 1993 that he would fly her to her wedding. He finally honoured his promise. Joanna works as an Air Traffic Controller at Biggin Hill therefore it was quite natural to fly to her wedding. Penshurst place has 650 years of history and it is only the last few years that it has been opened as a venue for weddings and corporate

events, surrounded with beautiful gardens, it is a delightful setting.



Following their marriage, Damon and Joanna are treated to a fly past of a lone Spitfire. The weather was



perfect, as was the graceful display.



Joanna and Damon are caught in a delightful pose by Francesca Willis her sister and one of the lovely bridesmaids. Damon is a Corporate Jet Captain adding another pilot to the Willis family.

### **EFG's NEW CLUB PREMISES**



The interior of EFG's new position on the airfield is very presentable and more spacious than outside appearances with two offices, examination and lecture room. Despite all the foreboding of losing the view across the airfield, the rear of the premises has an unrestricted

view from a pleasantly paved area for club members and friends.



We leave you with this stark image



of demolished history and many pleasant memories of flying and the many pilots and friends that have passed through these portals.

## AIRFIELD PERSONALITIES



### GORDON JONES ESQUIRE

An exquisite '*gentleman of distinction*' scrupulously attired at all occasions, residing in a well respected Mews, within the most sort after area of the '*Upstairs Downstairs*' region on the borders of Central London. The other side of the road, is *Hyde Park*. His *near neighbour*, lives just a stones throw from these well established dwellings in a large palace like building with wrought iron fencing and large gates to match and a large graveled area right up to the front door. Gordon developed an interest in Motor Racing in 1954 at

the 'Universal Motor Racing Club' driving school at Brands Hatch, and so started his racing career, where he met Graham Hill, and subsequently introduced him to Colin Chapman. Gordon's first few races in 1954 were in a Cooper JAP, achieving a third place in the Whitsun Sprint Race at Brands Hatch and a second in a JAP race on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June, but he switched to a Kieft racing car towards the end of '54, winning the Junior Race on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October. He continued with this car, earning a number of good placings, until 1957, when he acquired a Cooper Mk XI. Gordon continued to race 500's into the 1960's winning the Commander Yorke Trophy in August 1960, and the Lewis-Evans Trophy in October. He also competed in a Mk XI Lotus and in an early Marcos before turning his attention to flying. This followed as the result of an accident injuring his left ankle severely, restricting his dexterical use of the clutch. During his racing career he had raced at many different circuits, Castle Coombe, Brands Hatch, Silverstone, Snetterton, Mallory Park, Goodwood, Brighton Promenade and others that have faded into obscurity. He raced against such greats as, Ascari, Salvadori, Ivor Bueb, Stewart-Lewis Evans, Graham Hill and many others in these heady halcyon days of motor racing. Little thought was given to safety, as these enthusiastic racing experts enjoyed their life to the full. Pitting their skills against each other, until, the chequered flag was passed. Only then, did they lift off the throttle. They all appeared as gentlemen, and you never realised



their determination to win. Gordon's appearance, has changed little, over the years. Even whilst racing he was attired correctly, down to a collar and tie, not a hair out of place, befitting his status, as a '*scholar and a gentleman*'. Gordon appeared at Biggin Hill like a Geni from the lamp, with an Auster J4 G-AIJR. Gordon joined EFG and it befell to Rex Nicholls to teach him the methods of handling this flying machine. Not only did Gordon gain his Pilots Licence, he became an aviation enthusiast. Gordon became a regular at Biggin Hill for the past 44 years. During these years he owned a total of six aircraft. Following a 'Fly Drive' club run to France with members from EFG, Gordon spotted a little Jodel 120 in Toulouse which took his fancy. He decided to purchase this flying machine. Acquiring the services of Rex Nicholls, yet again, they would fly by airline to Toulouse, and ferry the aircraft back to Biggin Hill. This aircraft had only



one fuel tank and was called a '*Paris – Nice*' because that was the fuel range. Gordon later acquired a DH Chipmunk G-AMXL which was smashed, by some fool pilot, displaying his low flying skills over the Isle of Sheppey, striking a dyke in the process, wrecking the aircraft completely, fortunately no one was hurt. Gordon purchased a Piper Tri-Pacer which he owned for some time, before it was written off, in a high wind one night. Gordon also owned a DH Tiger Moth and a PA140. He also possesses a generous nature and would become involved with the Air Scout Group based at Biggin Hill. He would spend many weekends giving air experience flights, to the Air Scout members. He has maintained his keen interest in Motor Racing to this day.