



BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT BUGLE

News from our Airport at Biggin Hill - established 2005



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THE BUGLE IS EIGHT TODAY

We wish all our readers a Happy New Year and hope it will be brighter and drier than 2012.

It is truly amazing the amount of rain we have had over the past few months, unbelievable.



Cheers! May the coming year be brighter and more pleasurable for some good flying in 2013.

AIRFIELD PERSONALITIES:



Terry Harris.

Colloquially known as 'The Dripping Tap' because of his plumbing business he runs from his Bromley Business, which he has run for 30 years.

Parking nearby the shop is a little restrictive with just a couple of parking spaces.

He protects this area from parking wardens trying to ticket people who infringe the pavement with an ear piercing siren controlled from under the counter.

Any parking warden left exposed to this piercing sound would hurriedly move on as it only drew attention to his / her tenacity to annoy motorists trying to purchase a tap washer. It was great fun to watch these jobs worth scurry off.

His shop is always open carrying a huge stock within, no part is too small or too large and very reasonably priced.

Entering the shop is a little bewildering at first, crammed full of baths, sinks, showers, taps etc.,

The staff are very attentive and can put their finger on anything you can't see.

How they remember where everything is placed is a mystery.

Terry was introduced to flying some 18 years ago by a friend who was going for a trial flight.

He says he had a couple of lessons and became hooked.

He gained his licence at Kingair Flying Club at Biggin Hill.

During one of his many trips to Florida he purchased a Mooney 231 aircraft, which he still flies.

Terry has another interest, and you need to visit his home in Bromley at Christmas to see his fabulous decorations which cover his house and garden from top to bottom.

The editor went to visit Terry a couple of weeks ago to get a story on these decorations and how it all started.

Arriving at the house (in darkness) a voice was heard from above high on the roof fitting lights.

Terry has imported most of his Xmas lights from the USA on his many visits.

He collects a lot of money for charity and people come from miles around to see this wonderful extravaganza of light and mobiles.



Entrance to front door:



Garage blocker truck.



Cadillac car.



A large working mobile.



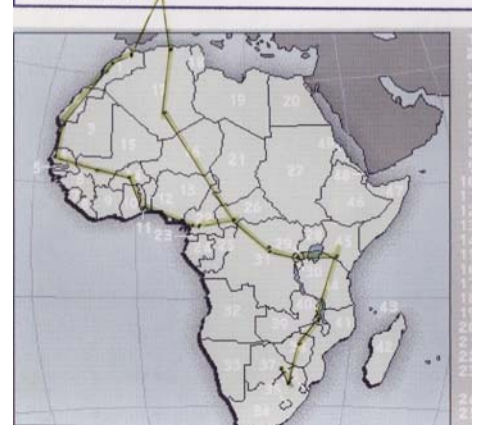
Truly a wonderful collection of working models.



It is hard to imagine how all these decorations are stored and then re-assembled the following year. Nevertheless it is a splendid effort by Terry each year. Worth a visit.

AFRICA 22 DAY SALES TOUR

THIS TOUR OF AFRICA WAS TO LAST FROM JULY TO OCTOBER, 1982 STARTING IN TARBES (FRANCE) 27 AUGUST AND RETURNING TO TARBES ON THE 24th OCTOBER..... Visiting the following places



It may be a little difficult to read the above text, however this sales tour was quite successful selling three aircraft which meant further trips to Africa for the editor (JB).



Some of the taxi rides experienced during this time were interesting if not dangerous.



Terry has featured on TV more than once with his decorative display each year.

Agadir, Morocco west coast of Africa, Joel Pulbert my Sales Director forages for fuel money.

We continue down the west coast of Africa taking in Nouadhibou and Nouakchott, both good eating places. (French Cuisine of course).

Finally we arrive at Dakar two days later where they had a large flying club and more good entertainment.

Dakar airport with the old airport just visible to the right of picture.



Managed to do some wind surfing here with some sharks swimming below my sail board.

Our next destination airport would be Bamako airport in Mali.



Having arrived quite early we decided to have something to eat at the airport before heading for the town only to be confronted by two army trucks full of soldiers.

We carried on eating and it was only after some time that we were told the road to town was closed as the President was coming.

We enquired as to his time of arrival, only to be told he's coming. Which means nothing..!

Well he didn't arrive until the late evening and it was now very dark. After his plane arrived they all embarked into the VIP lounge. We had previously acquired the services of a taxi driver and positioned ourselves on the

roundabout outside the airport ready to go to town a.s.a.p.

Soon 12 motorcyclists on BMW's arrived and with much revving of engines careered off down the road with the Presidents car following in hot pursuit.

AFRICAN TAXI JOURNIES:

At this instant, I shouted at our driver to go. He accelerated away at breakneck speed, but not on the road, through the bush, no lights, he didn't have any.

We were somewhat concerned as we sped through the bush with many tree stumps appearing and all the other taxis swerving as they in turn had to dodge the many tree stumps.

After sometime racing through the bush like this it became apparent why our taxi and indeed all the others had hundreds of dents all over their cars.

There was a single bridge across the Niger River with the city on the other side. Now this was a fairly narrow bridge designed for cars and trucks, the footpath was for motor cycles and pedestrians, absolute chaos which has to be seen to be believed. There was now a cone of cars funneling down to a single line, bumping, shoving with no care about damage to their vehicles. However we arrived safely at our hotel which was literally just over the bridge.

The next morning, we emerge from our hotel, refreshed by a nice French breakfast of croissant and coffee, we plan our day 'le premier priorite e le taxi'.

We exit the hotel into brilliant sunshine and stifling heat, nous prendre un taxi pour le aeroport du Bamako, nous proceder avec 'vitesse incroyable', après un moment breve nous entenare un click, click, click, click...!!!

The driver stops immediately exits the vehicle and from the luggage compartment takes a wheel brace and tightens the wheel nuts, nous

continue rapidment pour le aeroport, après un moment breve encore nous entenare le click, click, click, click, le chauffer halte, il repeater le procedure avant, nous continue avec vitesse tres, tres rapidment, encroyable. Après un moment le procedure e renouveler.

It is high time to investigate this repetitive procedure, so I exit the taxi to investigate the problem.

The vehicle in question is a French Peugeot 404 which has only three wheel nuts, our taxi has only 'two nuts' instead of the mandatory three as at manufacture.

Oblivious to the seriousness of the occasion our driver is determined to achieve the objective in spite of a loose wheel.

Soon after we pass through a small village at high speed our driver is confronted by a mature hen sedately crossing the road with a clutch of several chickens (more like mature pullets) following behind.

Do we brake, do we avoid, do we hell...!!!!

He holds his course irrespective, there follows several thumps, a huge cloud of feathers fills the air and before the feathers have had time to flutter peacefully to the ground the villages emerge intent on gathering the spoils from the road regardless of any traffic which may be following in the wake of our vehicle.....! Crazy man, crazy.

THE FOLLOWING DAY

Departure from Bamako, hours before sunrise outside the hotel we seek out a taxi to take us to the airport in the black of the African night. Before one enters into any contract or agreement with a taxi driver one should ascertain the fuel state of the said vehicle. Our driver assures us he has plenty of fuel to get us to the airport. We set off into the night across the only bridge out of Bamako.

A few miles out of the city our taxi coasts to a silent stop 'our driver'

equally silently exits the taxi and goes to the rear compartment and silently pads off into the surrounding jungle with a 5 litre can in his hand and simply disappears into the darkness. After what seems an incredibly long time I decide to investigate his disappearance, leaving my colleague, Joel Pulbert (known by the French as 'Pooh Bear' because of the French pronunciation of his name), to guard our luggage. After a short while I located an area in the middle of the jungle where many taxi's were parked up for the night, drivers sleeping with their feet out the windows and the silhouette of our driver proceeding from cab to cab waking all and sundry in a desperate bid to beg some fuel to fulfill his contractual agreement.

Whilst he was busy in his quest I located another taxi who said he had plenty of fuel, but could his friend come with us and being the middle of the night he probably had nowhere else to go, so I agreed and climbed into the taxi.

We arrived back at the roadside and whilst transferring our luggage, our previous driver appears silently and breathless out of the jungle demanding the relevant fare for his so far journey, claiming he hasn't any money to get back to town.

We proceeded in our new taxi toward the airport leaving our previous driver standing by the roadside.

Our journey continued uneventfully until we came to an incline whereupon this vehicle became silent and slowed to a stop, without hesitation the driver's assistant (friend) exited the passenger side with great haste and extricating a can of petrol from the boot. By now he is passing the side of the vehicle and taking a huge swig of petrol, the driver has opened the bonnet and his friend sprays fuel into the carburetor as the driver pushes the starter and we are off down the road as quick as

that. The friend having climbed in the vehicle, as nimbly as he exited we continue our journey.

It appears that the fuel pump wasn't working and whilst the vehicle was on level ground it was able to draw enough fuel to keep the motor running.

Fortunately the country around Bamako is relatively flat.

From Bamako we proceeded to Ouagadougou, Benin, Douala, Yaunde, Bangui from where we set course for Kisangani (Zaire) which is on the Congo River.

We arrived at Kisangani and had no response from their radio.

Our topographical chart showed two airports in the vicinity and one being shown as unusable.

Simsini was the old airport on the river about 5 miles away and was paved. It too had no radio so we decided to land there.



We land and taxi to the other end of the runway where to our surprise is a platoon of soldiers lined up in rank. My colleague said what shall we do now..?

Without hesitation I turned 180 degrees and applied full power and took off again speeding past the somewhat startled troops.

We decided to proceed to the other larger airport and see if we could ascertain if it was safe to land otherwise we would have to miss this stop out and proceed to Kigali in Rwanda.

It did in fact look as if it was in use with several aircraft scattered around.

We landed and taxied to the tower to be advised that there was a massive power failure and we were welcome.

Unfortunately there was no AVAGSLL which meant we couldn't fly any demonstration flights as we needed all our remaining fuel.

Our next problem was that we didn't have any local currency, nor could we change money because the bank was closed and the hotel wouldn't take credit cards.

We ended up in a French Monastery where they offered to change money for us after they finished their dinner.

We were led into an office which to our astonishment was stuffed full of elephant tusks.

My colleague bought a huge tusk as there were no import restrictions on ivory imports into France.

SOUVENIR HUNTERS



They would appear out of nowhere and fortunately we took loads of goodies with us, but most had to be hidden so as to spread them out.

LEFT TO THE JUNGLE



When I took this picture in 1982 the small tree had grown through the bottom of this Rallye and the Queen Air had bushes growing around the undercarriage.

The editor is signing off for now, but these tales of Africa will continue in February issue 2013.

In the meantime the editor JB thanks all his well wishes following his knee replacement