



CLUB AND AIRPORT NEWS

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FRANCE- INDIA- AUSTRALIA

Three Rallye aircraft were to depart from the SOCATA factory based at the foot of the Haute Pyrenees in France January 1977.



One bound for presentation to the Dehli Aeroclub at (Safdarjung), the old airport for Dehli flown by Francois Montel who was to depart from Tarbes on the 5th January 1977.

Mr Jacque Goudivou, Director of the sales division for Aerospatiale Paris would fly out to Dehli in a couple of days to arrive ahead of us for a meeting with the Indian Government who had just purchased two of the early Airbus aircraft.

I was to depart Tarbes on the 6th January with a planned rendezvous with my friend Maurice Sereé who was delivering an aircraft to Khartoum, but he was departing from Toussus Le Noble, Paris.

We had planned to accompany each other to Cairo where we would then go our separate ways.

This day dawned dreadful, with really bad weather all over France. Late afternoon, I was wandering around the factory whiling away the time, eventually walking back to the office to find a message that Maurice had already departed from Toussus Le Noble 30 minutes ago.

Without hesitation I left for Cannes climbing to a safe altitude and as I approached Cannes, Maurice called me on the radio enquiring as to conditions. I explained it wasn't good, but near the coast it showed signs of being reasonable and said I would descend over the sea and report.

The cloud base was 400ft with good visibility underneath, but the hills around Cannes were still enveloped in cloud.

We refueled and left for Bari in Italy, we ended up in Brindisi as darkness fell and Bari didn't have any night landing facilities.

Having been somewhat delayed today we now had another problem. Brindisi, does not have any Avgas.

The next morning we set off for Bari, just 61nm to the north, climbing out of Brindisi Maurice suddenly announces over the radio his fuel state is critical and was returning to Brindisi, whilst I had enough fuel.

I returned to Brindisi also to see if we could salvage the situation.

We transferred what fuel was left in Maurice's aircraft to my aircraft.



We then flew to Bari filling my aircraft, plus some extra cans, which we had borrowed and subsequently returned to Brindisi and balanced the fuel between the two aircraft so that we could get to Corfu which was just 108nm.



The airfield at Corfu is Kerkyra a nice airfield, friendly to everyone and a nice oldy-worldly hotel for



pilot's within walking distance from the airport, Kerkyra.

This is a family run place very cheap in these days. It became my personal hotel for many years, I would always phone ahead in advance of a planned trip, always being sure of a room.

Today, Maurice and I are still on catch up time, we are here to refuel and depart for Heraklion. We arrived in Crete at 21.30pm.

After re-fuelling we took a taxi to a nearby hotel for a well earned rest and something to eat.

The next morning we were able to make a more leisurely departure as we only have 443nm to Cairo from here and we can arrive after lunch.



Finally, to the sprawling airport of Cairo 8th January 1977.

All paperwork, pertaining to our flight was a long walk to the various departments, and most other things, 'insha' Allah.

The airport taxi rank outside the terminal required buying a ticket from a kind of policeman which was your fare and a receipt for the driver to get back into the airport taxi rank.

They didn't seem to trust the taxi drivers with money who immediately wanted 'baksheesh' even though he had just received his voucher for £20Ep.

Their driving skills had to be experienced, to be believed.

We were booked into the 'Club Med' which was quite civilised with mainly French people inside, we stayed up quite late this night.

The next morning we boarded an airport bus from 'Club Med' which caused a little confusion as they

should have only 20 people on board (with tickets) which no one checked as we boarded the bus.

After a while we explained that we were pilots and didn't have a ticket. All was resolved and off we went to the airport.

It took an hour to finally get all our clearance details sorted and we set course in different directions.

Maurice toward Khartoum, I headed for Jeddah 674 nm.

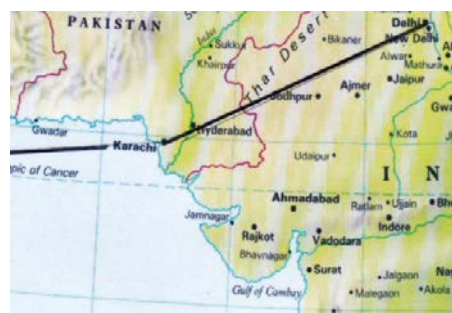


I would night stop here at the Sheraton Hotel (dry bar of course) but quite comfortable.

Getting out of the airport in the morning was the usual run around where time is not of the essence to these people, despite all my clearances. My next stop would be Bahrain routing overhead Riyadh in Saudia Arabia 728nm.



Next morning I leave Bahrain early for Karachi, Pakistan.



Leaving Bahrain was quite civilised and straight forward with 90% of the 910 nm leg over water.



The Indus River Delta precedes ones arrival to Karachi, Pakistan.

The Indus Delta is a muddy inhospitable place and inland the surface is no better, it is desolate, the airport is usually shrouded in a thick haze and is well camouflaged within these desolate surroundings. Karachi seems to have a seething mass of people 24 hours a day and the traffic is horrendous, without any concern for rules of the road.

The next morning dawns with a thick haze, more like a fog, but that is normal for this place.

Delhi (the old airport) is 548 nm from here and I need to clear customs before proceeding to Safdarjung.



The customs took a lot longer at Delhi demanding to see all my baggage in the terminal building.

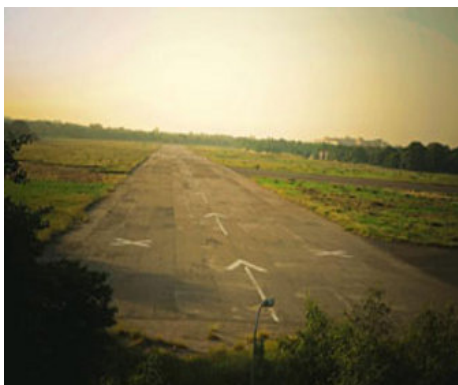
Having arrived at Safdarjung my French colleagues were waiting at the airport and told me that Sanjay Gandhi who was to be the next Crown Prince of India was coming to fly with me in the aircraft flown by Montel to India who had arrived the day before with this aircraft.

They were all going back to our hotel in Dehli, leaving me to fly with Sanjay.

I was informed that I would be interviewed by six policeman dressed in grey pinstriped suits and they would arrive shortly in a rusty VW Bus.

Sure enough they duly arrived, and all were over 6 feet tall.

They left saying Mr Sanjay will arrive shortly.



Days end at Safdarjung airfield.

Returning to our hotel I am greeted by Mdme Goudeveau, Jacques Goudeveau and Francois Montel.



We had an invitation to dinner at Government House the next evening requiring a suit.

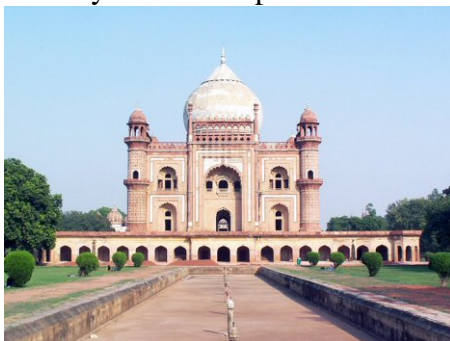
Panic! I never anticipated such an invitation, so there was a quick trip to a local tailor who assured me he could make a suit in time.

The next day I returned to Safdarjung for some more demonstration flights in the morning. I went to the tower at the end of the morning session asking if it was possible to fly some more. There was a negative response to my request.

At this moment a Maule aircraft roared off into the sky.

I asked the controller, who is that? He replied, 'Mr Sanjay Sir' I responded by saying, 'Good enough for Mr Sanjay is good enough for me.'

I flew in the afternoon for the next two days without a problem.



Safdarjung Tomb, close to the airport of Safdarjung.



The next morning Montel and I leave Safdarjung bound for Calcutta with the Himalayas just visible to our left during this flight. We flew for 5hrs 5min.

Calcutta is another seething city of people and the traffic is no better.

We had a restful night at Calcutta and left early the next morning for Rangoon, in Burma.



We pass over the Ganges Delta with its rising temperature rapidly building the clouds for the day.



We arrive at Rangoon after an uneventful flight of 4hrs 05min.

Very strange place, we had to declare how much money we intended to spend so that we would change extra money. (No credit cards in these days) and any change left couldn't be taken out of the country, even small coins.

In the morning we finally leave Rangoon after much questioning as to our financial details (what we



Sanjay and I were soon airborne and careered off in the direction of the Government buildings at very low level. I questioned his lust for flying low level, he replied, "nobody will say anything" how true, the writing was on the wall!

We returned to Safdarjung after 20 minutes, he got into a waiting car and disappeared.

I then decided to take a member from the flying club for a flight and was informed by the tower that it was not possible, as it was powered flight in the morning and gliders in the afternoon. It was well into the afternoon and having seen some gliders, I accepted this fact and returned to the Dehli Flying Club apologising for not being able to fly anymore today. I then took the company taxi to the Oberi Hotel where we were all guests of the Government of India.

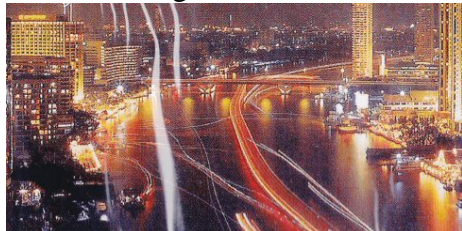
had left) from our declared monetary spend.

We arrive at Bangkok and proceed



downtown to a nice hotel. In the afternoon we visit 'Happy Happy' a place highly recommended by the company and they would pay the bill, on our return.

That evening we visited a very large Chinese Restaurant as guests of our Thai agents.



The Chao Phraya river of Bangkok has a continual flow of water traffic throughout the day and night. Some Thai dancers performed at our hotel in the evening.



Tomorrow we are heading for Penang, in Malaysia.

Establishing on finals at Penang with a new runway under construction, our runway is further ahead to the right.



Penang today is a nice place, it has grown since these early days.



Downtown Penang has plenty of shade and many shops selling souvenirs and some very good mobile food stalls. We stayed at the Oberi Hotel in Penang.

Our next destination is a bit further down the Malaysian Coast.



Base Leg at Seletar airfield Singapore, the perfect airport for non schedule flights and ferry pilots.

No delays ever experienced here.

Everyone here is very friendly, Immigration are helpful and so too are the ATC people.



We stayed at the Shangri-La Hotel at Singapore which was marvelous, they changed the carpets in the lifts at midnight to the next appropriate day – these were quite large and there was more than one lift.



From Seletar we headed for Bali, Indonesia which took 7hrs 50mins. A beautiful place for a holiday, but they do have some strange religious holidays.



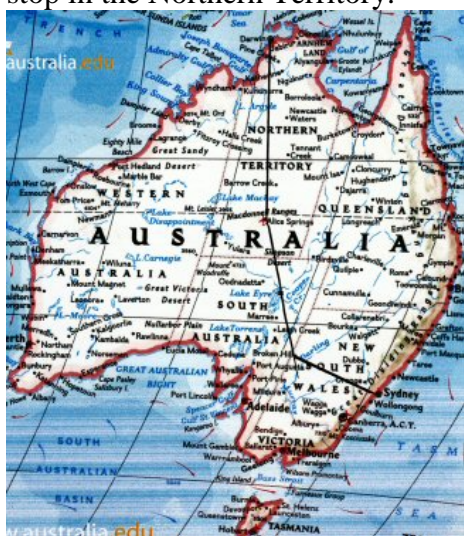
Bali International is situated on a small Peninsula.



Montel and myself will leave this lovely place for Darwin 958nm just 8hrs 30min a fairly long day tomorrow most of it over water.



Darwin airport is in the distance with just two more days after this one, tomorrow we head inland to Alice Springs for our last night stop in the Northern Territory.



Alice Springs is a long way from nowhere and it rarely rains.



On the way to Broken Hill we fly across the beautiful Simpson Desert which changes colour as the sun moves across the land.



We fly across Lake Eyre next which is a mainly a large salt lake, but it does fill with water at times becoming the 18th largest lake in the world.



Broken Hill airfield comes into view on the horizon where we are to refuel before our last leg to Bankstown, near Sydney.



Two very sun tanned pilots arrive at Bankstown after 19 days.



JB pinning a medal on Montel.



A view from Keith Woodward's office the new SOCATA agent.

We will meet again at Le Bourget in September 1977

20,000 km in a Rallye

Tarbes to Sydney, or 20,000 kilometres, is the kind of distance one associates with a B-747 but is a long journey indeed for a single-engine Rallye light plane. Yet this flight was made recently by a Rallye 235 in a little under three weeks, 99 flight hours and 17 stopovers.

Piloted by Socata's François Montel and John Bryan of Air Touring Services, the plane was scheduled for delivery to a new Socata agent in Sydney, Mr. Keith Woodward.

No technical hitches were encountered and once again the Rallye showed what a dependable aircraft and how easy to fly it is.

Demonstrations were held at each of the 17 stopovers, notably at Singapore and Delhi.

Socata concessionaire Keith Woodward looks ha



2nd from left Keith Woodward. 5th from left JB, Montel and Mr Soreé

Du 5-01-1977 au 25-01-1977
 99 heures de vol
 17 escales
 4 500 litres d'essence
 Pilotes professionnels :
 M. François-Marie MONTEL
 M. John BRYAN

Sadly Sanjay Ghandi would be killed during low level aerobatics in his Pitts Special, along with the CFI of the Delhi Flying Club near his home on the 23rd June 1980

