



*The Baragwanath
Barometer*

Issue 13, December 2011



Editorial *from Hanger No.1*

Once again the members of JLPC have really come to the party in adding to a newsletter which has grown in size since its first issue four years ago. I have been overwhelmed by the response from the readers in their contributions to this latest edition. You can enjoy their stories between these pages.

From my side, the initiation of the Old Birds at Baragwanath Gatherings have kept me out of mischief, and this third-Sunday-of-the-month events are also starting to gain more and more support. I've always felt an affinity to old aeroplanes, and this informal get-together is a chance to marvel at some interesting types (both flying and non) and celebrate that which we all have in common – the love of being up in the air.

On a more personal note, in a few weeks time I'm going to be a Dad! My wife is having a little girl, and I've already made sure that the baby seat can fit into the passenger seat of our Cessna. We're both very excited about the new arrival, and yet another little pilot will be playing at the lawn in front of the clubhouse at Baragwanath.

As always, any contributions are most welcome and once again I hope that you enjoy this latest edition.

Blue skies,

Courtney Watson
Editor



CRUISE FLIGHT

— Rob Robinette

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of my spouse

And danced the clubs on Kiwi-polished boots;

Moonward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth

Of Moon-split clouds — and done a hundred things

You have not dreamed of

High in the dome lit silence. Holding there, I've scared the airsick pax, and flung their baggage through footless halls of air.

Up, up the long, delirious, burning black I've topped the turbulent heights with little grace

Where never C-130, or even C-5 flew. And, while with fuzzy, sleep deprived mind I've trod

The high untrampled sanctity of controlled airspace,

Put out my hand, and touched the face of The Aircraft Commander, who thinks he is God.



The Not-So-Gentle Lady

By Courtney Watson

A Harvard is by no means a gentle aeroplane. Everything is robust; forged from steel that is made to withstand any breaking force. In the cockpit, the rudder bar is thick and solid, and the control column is a meaty rod that you feel you need to grip with two hands to have control over.

translate it into female form, I think it would be a woman that looks like this:

She lives on her own farm and is tanned by hours of ploughing fields. She drives her own tractor in the early morning, wearing nothing but a G-string with 9mm pistol tucked in the elastic. She would scrub up really nicely, but that shadow of a moustache just above her upper lip would definitely have to go. It's the sort of lady who would mother the likes of Bakkies Botha and Victor Matfield. She is tough, no nonsense and tells it just like it is.



Most aircraft have girls' names, but I don't think there is any one that would suit a Harvard. The aeroplane is just too, well, rugged. That is not to say that there is a real sense of beauty about the lines that the wings make as they join the fuselage or the flange of that round radial engine. It's just that a Harvard is anything but fragile. If I tried to

The picture of this lady of quite vivid in my mind, but I seem to be grappling at straws when it comes down to putting a name to that face. My father-in-law gave me some help with this and came up with a bit more of a classical interpretation...Boadicea. She led a rebellion against the Romans in about 60 BC. Boadicea had red hair. It was described as a mass of "the tawniest hair" hanging to her



waist. She was very tall, "in appearance almost terrifying" and had a fierce expression. Her voice was described as harsh, a voice destined to demand attention, to be heard above the din of battle.

It isn't much of a stretch to apply this description to a Harvard. If you just squint in your mind's eye a bit, both of these anecdotes seem to fit the aeroplane quite neatly. A Harvard is not like a Spitfire or Mosquito, whose delicate lines are definitely synonymous with a gentle, nurturing figure and gather names that are all prefaced with 'Lady'. Names like Lady Rosaline, Lady Josine or Evelyn cannot be emblazoned in the front of a Harvard. But I think Boadicea is quite good.

The reason I can make all of these sweeping claims is because in the middle of October, I went for my first ride in a Harvard, thanks to Ivan who flew her in to the first Old Birds at Baragwanath Day. Like many of you, I have always rushed outdoors to catch a glimpse of that distinct throaty radial as a Harvard flew overhead, and I've run my fingers along their wingtips when they have been parked at Airshows, wondering what it would be like to fly such an inspiring aeroplane.

So going for a twenty minute flip in a Harvard was really like a dream come true for me. The grin on my face before and after the flight is enough to tell the story of how I felt. I fly a Tiger Moth and a small Cessna 140, so when the Harvard started up, the sense of power in front was vastly different to what I was used to. Even on the ground the Harvard felt like it wanted to take off. There is a lot of space in the cockpit, which is incidentally, devoid of anything that is without purpose. It is military, precise and rugged.

When we moved along the taxiway, the width



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of the tar seemed much smaller to what I was used to and it is interesting how your perspective can change in just an instant. The run-up was another change where the grunt from the Pratt and Whitney surged against the brakes...this aeroplane was really keen to climb into the skies.



I'm not going to bore you with the intricacies of the flight, because trying to put this experience into words might just ruin it. What I will do is write about the aerobatics that we did. I have always had an interest in flying at unusual attitudes, and with the help of the likes of Bob Hay, my Dad and others, I have had a bit of aerobic dual in the Tiger Moth.

The Harvard, however, is a completely different kettle of fish. With the speed at which we entered the first loop, G force takes on a slightly different meaning, as I found my cheeks trying to touch my chin and my hands heavy to lift. The world turned upside down and looking backwards I saw the horizon reappear above me as we reached the top of the manoeuvre. Then the speed built up again and I tightened my stomach as the G's resurfaced once again. The sound of the engine was a throb coming from the front of the aircraft, but from where I was sitting, I didn't hear the characteristic clap of the propeller that you hear from the ground. I thought for an instant of how the sound is

created by tips of the props nearing the speed of sound as they turned in front of the pistons, and as that thought disappeared, we edged up into a stall turn.

I watched the horizon turn perpendicular to the orange wingtip and gently we floated over the top. The aircraft arched sideways and gathered speed before levelling out. I couldn't stop grinning and the smile on my face speaks louder than the words on this page. Our final pattern in the sky was a barrel roll that turned the world upside down once again.

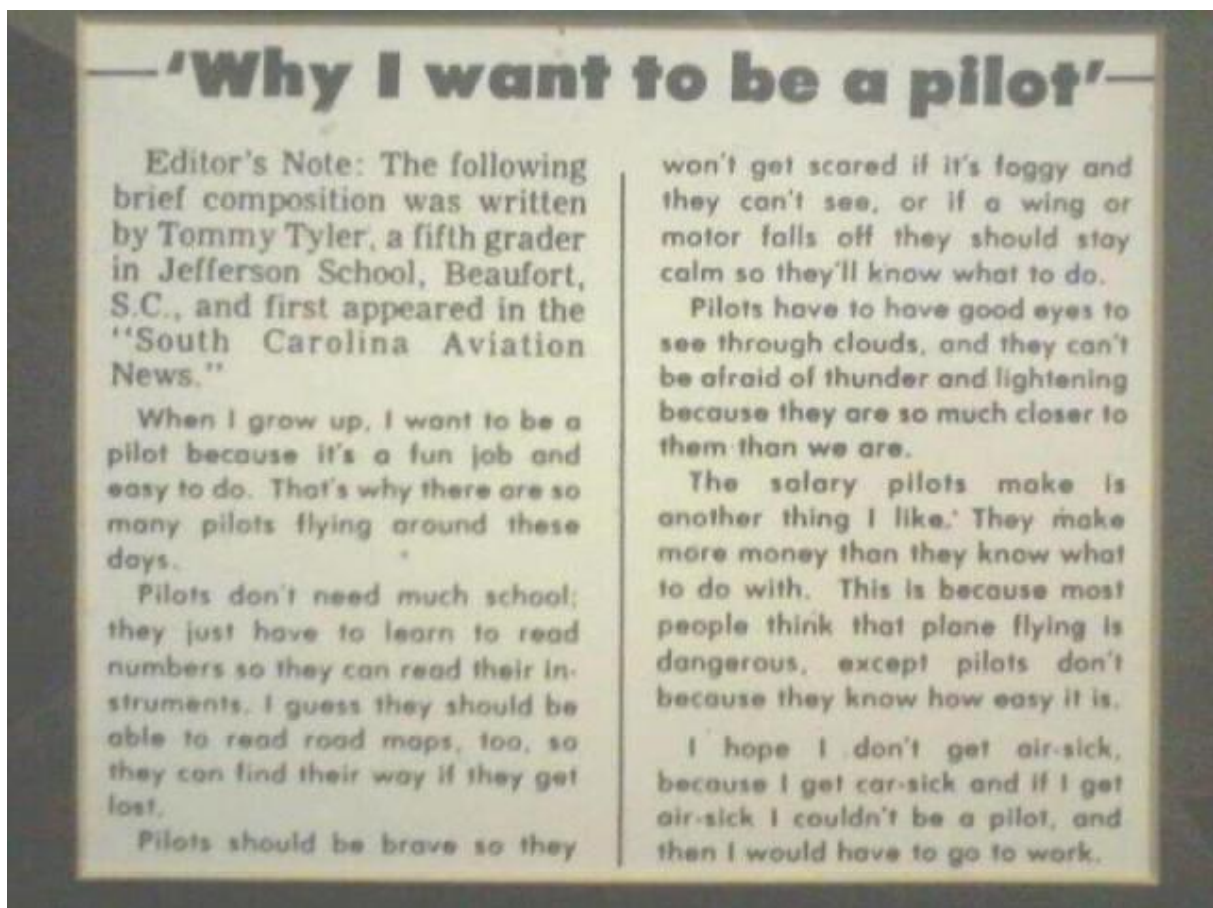
I remember wondering how pilots remain so responsible when flying these aircraft. If it were me, I would struggle to fight the urge to imagine that I was a World War Two Ace, and go about pretending to strafe lonely farm buildings and doing low fly pasts over railway stations. I think I would be a menace, my overactive imagination taking over the responsibilities that I hold as a pilot. I think that a conversion onto a Harvard must come with either a certificate of responsible flying or the talent of not getting caught doing fun, frowned upon aeronautics.



I felt like a hero even though I was just a passenger, and in those twenty minutes, I found myself fall in love with that brutish, no-nonsense Boadicea (but don't tell my wife). The images of the Harvard legacy all came



together and I understood the romance that Air Force pilots have for this mark. She is truly a special aircraft.





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One Pilot's Lament

By A Flying Type

I was the starry eyed Joe Soap - eight year old kid standing next to his bicycle leaning on the fence and watching the pilots taxiing by. I tried to hypnotise these heroes of the sky for occupancy of complete, vastly vacant seats in their aircraft. The fact that some of these flights might of been student pilots on their first solo and that bicycle might be gone when I returned - was of no concern! I guess one might say that I was already an addict then. Well it got much worse!

After establishing my own business and at the age of thirty two I managed to scrape, work, beg borrow and starve for the means to achieve my P.P.L. I was bitten, smitten and converted into an aviation junkie. Since then three weeks without my rear end elevated into the blue yonder has brought severe withdrawal symptoms of ground rooted depression. This can only be medicated through the vertigo of a rapid turning propeller screwing an aeroplane with my personal accompaniment out of ground affect.



The instructor who taught me to fly always threatened before flying that if I killed him he would beat me up! One of his tricks was to read the open newspaper while you flew the cross country. Just when you start relaxing a bit - you get caught out! He had a hole in the newspaper and that he was really watching

your D.I. and altimeter - to increase your beer owing score. He used to turn the fuel off before entering spin, and watch for your expression when the engine coughed out in the spin. Before he sent me on my first solo - his last remarks were "and try not to break the machine - hey?"



Then there was that time just after I got my license when low level steep turns between the sand dunes was exciting. I remember coming over the one dune to see a squatter shack with a door-less outside toilet cubicle. Man - this chap who was sitting therein and saw this Cessna coming eye level at ninety five knots an hour at him must have gone through the motions without much further concentration!

Some fifteen years later, and thousands of hours of successful other pilot hypnosis theory, and over seven hundred and fifty flying hours logged I have many reflections to look back on. I talk to ten thousand hour Jumbo captains and realise that some of my aviation experiences have never been realised by these pilots!

Those low level trips up and down the coast into the unusual strips for the hell of it and a holiday. The flying around just looking for unknown and farm landing strips. The see South Africa from the air trips. The scenic photographic trips for my own albums. The business trips. The fly-away visits to the air-shows and fly-inns - the flying as a begging passenger.



Then I became an airport bum. It wasn't at all hard. I allied my rear end with a flying club and became a committee member at an international airport. I had the means of walking freely around to investigate any new and unusual aircraft with vacant seats and pilots arriving and departing somewhere : anywhere !!

It is the aircraft one inhabits - but the pilots who allow you to recline in the comfort of their aircraft seat!

Now with my camera and flash handy in my trade being allied to photography - then : I promised and delivered colourful photos of these smiling pilots behind their throttle controls with Table Mountain as the visual panorama whilst thrust overcome weight in flight! I wish happy hours. I went on many aircraft test flights, training flights and just plain flights.



Gratification's to Oom Daan, James, Nick, Richard, Clive, Chris, Aaron, Rob, Rodger and Johan and the other thousands I might have left out. No thanks to you - to those pilots who exacerbated to my sickness by reclining my company in their spacious vacant seats.

Yours truly sat in Lears, Citations, Falcons, King Airs, Cessnas and Pipers, for that matter - anything that flew -

preferably with some sort of wings, rotors or any lighter than air lifting device. Stalls and unusual attitudes, rapid descents and engine outs, instrument calibration flights, and flips for the sake of flying where all gratefully acceptable! Man - some of those things the guys did to these aeroplanes just did not work on the Cessna 172! I had rides in executive jets to Johannesburg and back where celebrities and others were conveyed in the sky. An engine spluttering whilst ten foot



above Clanwilliam dam in a Tiger-moth. A shoot up in an overpowered jet from a low level high speed beat up at sea level to FL350. I had rides and flew many times myself - around Table Mountain and the Peninsula, and around Table Mountain and the Peninsula and around again and again. I can fly that course with my eyes closed : never mind a hood!

I had trips to ships in Sikorskis dozens of times. One time the ships' captain did not want to let me get back on the chopper - never mind the camera. I had captured the event of a Southern African S61 helicopter landing on a political sensitive oil can passing too close to our embargoed coast! Hell that Nikon just wasn't economical to repair after



The stick of Alloettes, s581s, s61s, Hughes 500s, Robbys, and Jetrangers aloft were sometimes at my own disposal. These things would just not hover, man! I still believe that hovering is actually an optical illusion and that these helicopter contraption pilots are smooth talkers going no-where! Sitting with ones feet outside of a Puma's side door whilst target shooting with two 50 Brownings is not deafening at all - the percussion time x'es your ears before the noise has any damaging chance. Looking for a rouge buffalo all day in the Caprivi from an open door in a low flying Frelon is an experience you cannot buy at a travel agent.

being examined by the ship's captain! Accidentally self inflating the life jacket in the scramble to climb to the friendly safety deck of the S61 did not make any additional pleasantries. I went up so fast there must have been some miracle lighter than air gas in that life jacket!

Another time I hitched back 400 kilometres from Swakopmund to Windhoek just for a one way ride on a S61! On many of the scheduled airline flights I travelled - I managed to weasel my way into the cockpit jump seat for take-offs and landings.



The most scenic flight was coming into Johannesburg International Airport in an Airbus 320 at sunset in the middle of a thunderstorm in the jump seat with the best cockpit view. The captain found the airport without much of my prompting! On this aeroplane the dining room table folds out in front of the pilot and the insignificant pac-man type stick is somewhere below the side windows. This apparently can be manipulated with the elbow while eating with the plastic knife and fork. One understands why the aviation medical checks for colour blindness.



Television screens on these aircraft would be boring if one was colour-blind. I am sure these pilots tune into the sports channel after selecting the auto pilot on climb out if not on taxi out! Who knows they probably participate in a second occupation whilst the customers relax back there.

Then there was the time I was arrested with a friend just for kicking the nose-wheel of a Concorde. We had been engaged to photograph the loading of the Concorde at an

international airport with in-flight catering refreshment replenishment by the company contracted for this service. The food company had issued us with airport apron permits and had the permission of British Airways to take these photographs. The only problem was that they had forgotten about obtaining clearance from the Airport manager - who promptly had us arrested just before we could do the "kick the tyres" pre flight check. After being in Airport custody for over an hour - a plate full of chicken wings seemed to resolve



the matter and we were free to go without photographing the Concorde being loaded with trays of in-flight refreshments and further compromising the security of the State.



Having a brother in law who was an aircraft technician at the main airlines service centre necessitated a visit through the technical area on every visit to the big city. You have to check these things out yourself if you want to be happy riding up in them! Climbing up and touching a 747 beacon light on the tail, going into the computer and front wheel bay area in a Jumbo and Airbus. Examining the elevator jack screw on a Jumbo are some experiences worth mentioning. Man one can actually get airsick in those there simulators. After one ride in the 747 simulator I had a careful look around after getting out to see where the rest of the aeroplane has been hidden away.

Another time we were taxiing out in a little 172 when we had to stop before the apron for a 737 to push back. While we were waiting a naughty little 747 crept up and parked almost over our tail with the pilot broadcasting the words "just do not look back!" We soon realised just how tiny our little 172 was. Once we were cleared for taxi again - I could not resist telling the Captain of the 747 to 'stand on his brakes or go fly kites' when we were cleared to throttle up to move forward!

Flying has always been a serious business and has become a business to be even more serious about! Gone are the days when flying was unrestricted and uncontrolled. With the modern age of high speed jet travel and aircraft saturated skies, safety has become the most important aspect of flying. Regulations and more regulations together with the capital and running cost of an aircraft tend to make social and fun flying a thing of the past. As the popular bumper sticker says "if God had wanted us to fly he would of given us much more money". Many previous social





flyers now prefer to do instrument ratings and fly Instrument Flight Rules even in Visual Flight Rule conditions - which takes some of the fun out of flying.

Flying is a serious business. Airspace is starting to become so restricted that soon you will just clip an a limited length attachment chain onto an cable in the sky that will connect your

how many spoons of sugar he would like in his coffee. These sensors will measure when the aircraft is ready to rotate and tell the maintenance crew what a bad heavy landing the computer did on the nose wheel. Soon - the captain can take the day off and still undertake pilot in command with his cellular - while playing golf ! : " to abort take off push



aircraft to a fixed path to your destination or just fly down a laser beam. Aircraft are becoming so technical that the flying is being taken out of the aviating. With G.P.S.flying we will be re-igniting the exhaust fumes of the chap just in front of you to optimise the unburned gas!

Soon the aircraft computer will talk to the captain who will be sitting in seat number 452P. The aircraft will tell him from sensors on the undercarriage while loading what the actual changing weight and where the centre of gravity of the aircraft is - and then ask him

button seven 7 plus asterix ". Will this guy ever figure out how to fly a Piper Cub again or even throw a paper aeroplane? AS Alan Bramson sais for commercial piloting ' it is a shame to take the money!'

As an older pilot now I read every flying script and attend every safety seminar I can. Nobody ever knows it all in this game. You never stop learning and every new flight brings with it a new joy and flying experience. Speaking of flying with ones eyes closed my flying does not involve a night rating or instrument training. There is no way that I



am ever going to get into these conditions or above 8/8s cloud in a man made and serviced single engine aircraft. This is for brave and trusting pilots and night rated mosquitoes. Affording to fly a powerful twin would give me the motivation to expand my knowledge into these directions.

Now I have never claimed to be the ace of the base or even that I am competition material or for that matter any aviation authority at all. My type of flying has always been on the aircraft limits technically known as 'Hooveringflyingdathing!' Why - do one touch and go on a three kilometre runway when you can actually experience three safely and two at the airports company expense? The last take off is safer than a short field take off since you have just touched down at close to flying speed and do not have to accelerate much to flying speed again. Why do a full stop landing when you can do a touch and go and fly to expedite exit at the intersection after doing another landing. This is a value for money way of keeping your landings up to

standard and to beat inflation. I do have shortcomings though - I have never managed to fly the turning from runway to the taxiway yet.

Those of us whom elect to fry fly low wing aeroplanes in the sun only do so because they learnt to fly in these strange machines. The wing above and Gods' view below me is what I enjoy. Do these guys really fly inverted all the time just to optimise the view and keep in the shade with the wing above them!

Right now I am a very contented private pilot whom enjoys the feeling of flying - surfing the lumps in the sky, the beautiful scenic views, the trips to Maun and Margate, the business trips, the Transkei and other exotic local destinations where you can beat the bumper to bumper ground traffic. When I am over ninety and wear half inch glasses and they put gasometers and toll gates in the sky; and indeed when I am at rest with the universe - I will still dream of my memories aloft! My very mind is full of sky! Everyday is a flyday!





Blast from the Past

Take a look at some of these photographs from 'Old' Baragwanath 1947 Air Pageant. Many thanks to Gerald for this contribution...



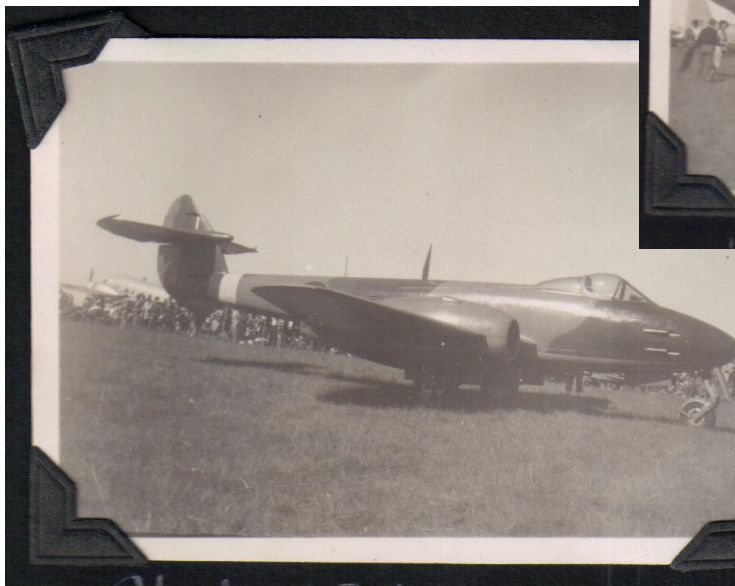
De Havilland Dove, with two Gypsy Queen Engines



An Avro Lincoln II which broke the London-Cape Record



The Viking from the King's Flight



Gloster Meteor III with Rolls Royce Derwent Jet Engines





Old Birds at Baragwanath



Old Birds at BARAGWANATH
PRE 1969 AIRCRAFT ARE ENCOURAGED TO COME

3rd Sunday of every month | Arrivals : 10:00 am
GPS - Co-ordinates : 26°20'54.49"S | 27°46'44.94"E

all other aircraft are welcome too!

for more details please contact Courtney | cwatson@stithian.com

good ol'
Baragwanath!

OLD BIRDS AT BARAGWANATH
PRE 1969 AIRCRAFTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO COME
all other aircrafts are welcome!

SUNDAY, 20 NOVEMBER | ARRIVALS : 10:00AM
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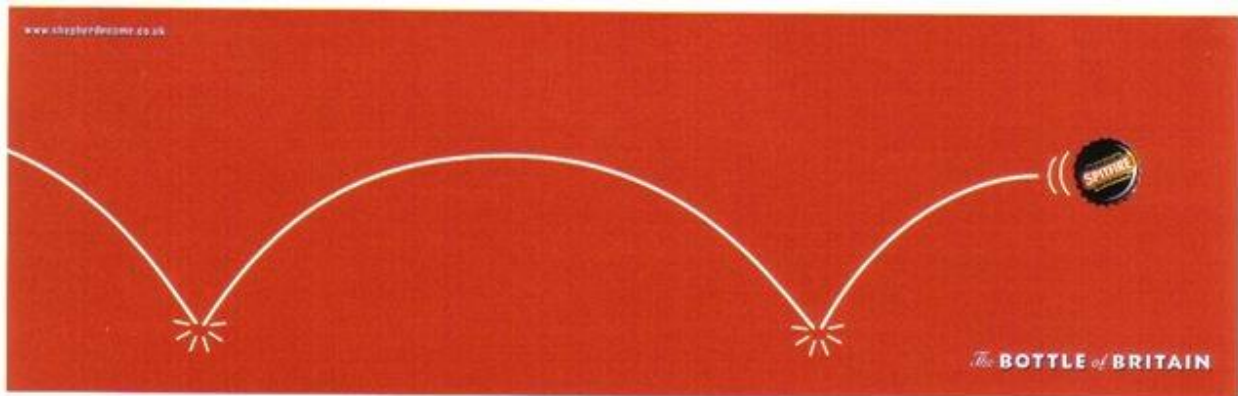


It's ironic that as a relative youngster in the flying world, my real interest is firmly place in the 'old' aeroplane camp. I am fascinated by the intricate 'spit and string' that seems to keep these aeries in the sky as well as their aesthetics that hark back to a bygone era of aviation where pioneers solved aeronautical problems with ingenuity and inspiration.

My imagination races when I think about the 1930's, 40's and 50's when (as the old dotage goes) "flying was dangerous and sex was safe." Men and women, armed with courage and common sense (well, nine times out of ten they had common sense), explored the globe in flimsy flying machines and I think that everyone can appreciate the romance that goes along with that bygone era.

So, I have decided to try and put something new together at Baragwanath Airfield where we will all be given the opportunity to marvel at the 'old aeroplanes' on a regular basis. Starting from 16th October 2011 (and on the third Sunday of each subsequent month) I'd like to hold a get-together for the old aeroplanes. Aircraft built before 20th July 1969 (when Neil Armstrong set foot on the moon and man was no longer earth-bound) will be eligible to park in the prime space in front of the clubhouse as the 'old aircraft'. So if you have an aerie which qualifies, bring her along! Arrivals are from 10:00 and some tea, coffee and scones will be available at the clubhouse. This is intended to be a family event, so bring along the wife and kids! If you would like to stay on, feel free to bring your own picnic lunch – there are braais available at the clubhouse.

Anyone with a more 'modern' aeroplane is more than welcome to come along, but obviously priority parking will be given to the 'old birds'.





For Sale

PIETENPOL

John Taylor's Pietenpol Aircamper and his Luton Minor are both up for sale. Contact Noel and he will forward some information. The workmanship on these aircraft is superb.

KR-2

Johan Maritz's KR2 is for sale. Contact Johan for details.

TURBULENT

PvdP's Turbulent ZS-UGN is for sale...but only when I've finished it! This particular aircraft was built by one of the best known aircraft builders of the 1970s, Bruce Vivian of Pietermaritzburg. It won the 'Best Homebuilt' award at one of the EAA Conventions in the mid 1970s.



PIPER TRI-PACER

½ (or possibly full share) share in Piper Tripacer ZU-BDF hangared at Baragwanath. Anyone interested can phone Brian on 082 453 7057 or Keith on 083 268 4521.



TIGER MOTH BOTSWANA SAFARI DVDS and CALENDARS

DVDs and calendars featuring stunning footage of six Tiger Moths and one Hornet Moth flying over the Makgadikgadi Salt Pans, the Okavango Delta and Victoria Falls are available for purchase at R120.00 each.

Filming took place during a trip in April 2011 which drew participants from all over the world. For more information contact cwatson@stithian.com or alternatively you can look at our website <http://tigermothbotswanasafari.yolasite.com>





Parting Shot

A reminder of yesteryear...

I hope that you enjoyed this final issue of 2011, and I hope that after having a good Christmas, you will find 2012 filled with blue skies and lots of good flying days.

2012 promises to be a good year and the committee have put in a number of new initiatives to revitalize the club. The most noteworthy is the emergence of a catering company which is going to provide breakfast and lunch for an ongoing basis on weekends. Hopefully Baragee will be a hub of aviation activity with visiting and local pilots enjoying the hospitality.

