

The Baragwanath Barometer



Issue 15

August 2012



Editorial *from Hanger No.1*

Clearly fatherhood is taking its toll as this is only the second Baragwanath Barometer to come out this year.

And this is my thought for the day when it comes to the fourteenth issue of this newsletter: at what age should kids be taken flying? It has been a debate with my wife for some time now as I spent an afternoon at Bara checking to see if I could get our car seat into the front cockpit of our Cessna 140. It fitted perfectly and with enough room for full movement of the controls.

That being said, my missus felt that some sort of ear muffers were in order because without headsets, a then four month old baby might not take too kindly to having her ears blasted by the wind coming through poorly sealed doors or the rumble of a 100 hp engine.

So, our plans were shelved for a while, but the debate carried on. At the same time I was reading 'Sky Feaver'. Geoffrey de Havilland's autobiography and this spurred me on. It's an extract from one of the earlier chapters when he experiments with his first successful aircraft in 1910 which looked much like a Bristol Boxkite, but was designed by himself and Frank Heale:

"A few days later I suggested to Louie (Geoffrey's wife) that she might have a ride. However nervous she might have felt about our future while i continued to indulge my passion for flying and for aeroplanes, she recognised by then that there was no deterring me and therefore she would give me all possible encouragement. I think that she agreed because she knew it would please me and felt that it would be good to show some interest in my work. So she came over from Crux Easton one afternoon in the pony and trap with young Geoffrey in her arms, and climbed gamely into the second seat. I think that she enjoyed the flight too, and at eight weeks of age, Geoffrey Jnr must, at the time, have been the youngest person in the world to go up."



So there goes my over-protectiveness, and we've decided that at the next opportunity, we'll take Bella up. If Geoffrey Jnr could do it





at eight weeks, I'm sure Bella will be happy at eight months and hopefully the bug will bite, just like it did with me!

Anyway, I hope that you enjoy this edition and as always, any contributions are most welcome. Please email me with pictures, comments and your musings about being in the air.

Courtney Watson

(Editor)

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Useful Information

A student became lost during a solo cross-country flight. While attempting to locate the aircraft on radar, ATC asks, "What was your last known position?" The reply: "When I was number one for takeoff".

Aviation Dictionary

Airspeed: Speed of an airplane. Deduct 25% when listening to a Baragwanath pilot.

Bank: The folks who hold the lien on most pilots' cars.

Dead Reckoning: You reckon correctly, or you are.

Engine Failure: A condition which occurs when all fuel tanks mysteriously become filled with air.

Firewall: Section of the aircraft specially designed to let heat and smoke enter the cockpit.

Glide Distance: Half the distance from the airplane to the nearest emergency landing field.

IFR: A method of flying by needle and ripcord.

Lean Mixture: Nonalcoholic beer

Parasitic Drag: A pilot who bums a ride and complains about the service.

Range: Usually about 30 miles beyond the point where all fuel tanks fill with air.

Rich Mixture: What you order at the other guy's promotion party.

Roger: Used when you're not sure what else to say.

Service Ceiling: Altitude at which cabin crews can serve drinks.

Spoilers: The Civil Aviation Authority.

Stall: Technique used to explain to the bank why your car payment is late.





Airfield News

From the pen (or email) of Johan:

It's just after 6 o'clock. Who said it's boring at Bara and without surprises?

One day it's a snow covered place, the next day it's a cattle farm and the next day it's a very smoky place and fire all around the airfield.

In one week you can build a snowman, be a cattle farmer, a fireman and an air traffic controller. You can also be a Vet if your dogs get sick.

And oh, yes, occasionally somebody will fly an airplane around.

Just a normal week for Hannes and I...



Cows on the field



The fire



Snow on the field





Mike and his Mates

Steve McCurrach uses his Rainbow Cheetah for his aerial photography business.

During the cold/snow spell we had last week, he went up in his Cheetah to try get this shot he had been planning on for 2 years.

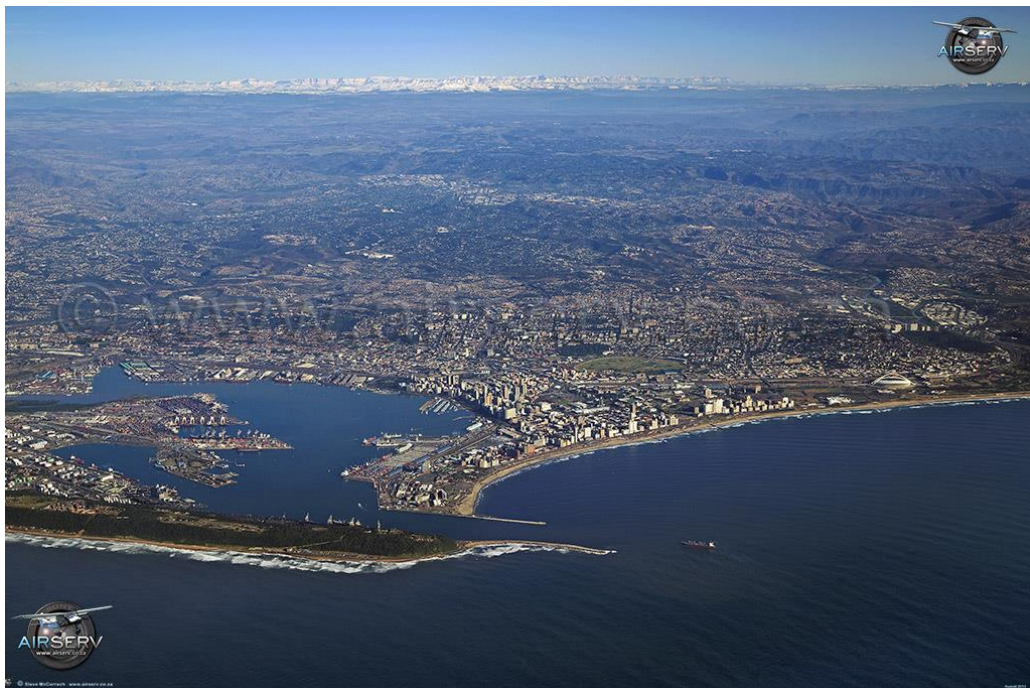
Here is his story and photo, I thought it worth sharing:

(Mike Gill)

We all know that iconic pic of Durban/KZN depicting Beach to Berg and which can be seen hanging on the walls of half the offices one walks into in Durban. That pic is now old enough that I took it upon myself to badger the photographer John Hone into capturing an update, offering in the exercise that I provide the aviation and he do the photography. This goes back two years and at the time John was immediately keen for this and right behind the idea, but he was battling leukaemia at that stage and not up to it. John insisted however that I should go it alone, stating that if/when I get a pic of a suitable standard, then he will support me through his old company of Art

Publishers in then getting the new pic well distributed. Very sadly the infamous John Hone succumbed to his fight against the leukaemia in early May this year, a great loss to all who knew John and without doubt the photographic community is poorer for the loss of that humble perfectionist.

John's original Beach to Berg has in it the old power station cooling towers of New Germany, the oil tanks at the Point where uShaka stands today, of course the new MM Stadium is not in the original and nor is The Pavilion. So it really was time to renew this image, which as said above is somewhat iconic of KZN and which is much liked by all who view it. Getting the right conditions for this pic is a case of a specific set of weather permutations, in order to get around the very prevalent winter haze problem, with the desirable conditions being a winter rarity – the passing of a wet cold front. Well it happened with last week's protracted cold and wet weather and I got the pic.





From the Archives

B-17 414th Squadron Crew

Pilot- Ken Bragg Jr.

Copilot- G. Boyd Jr.

Navigator- Harry C. Nuessle

Bombardier- Ralph Burbridge

Engineer- Joe C. James

Radio Operator- Paul A. Galloway

Ball Turret Gunner- Elton Conda

Waist Gunner- Michael Zuk

Tail Gunner- Sam T. Sarpolus

Ground Crew Chief- Hank Hyland

A mid-air collision on February 1, 1943, between a B-17 and a German fighter over the Tunis dock area, became the subject of one of the most famous photographs of World War II.

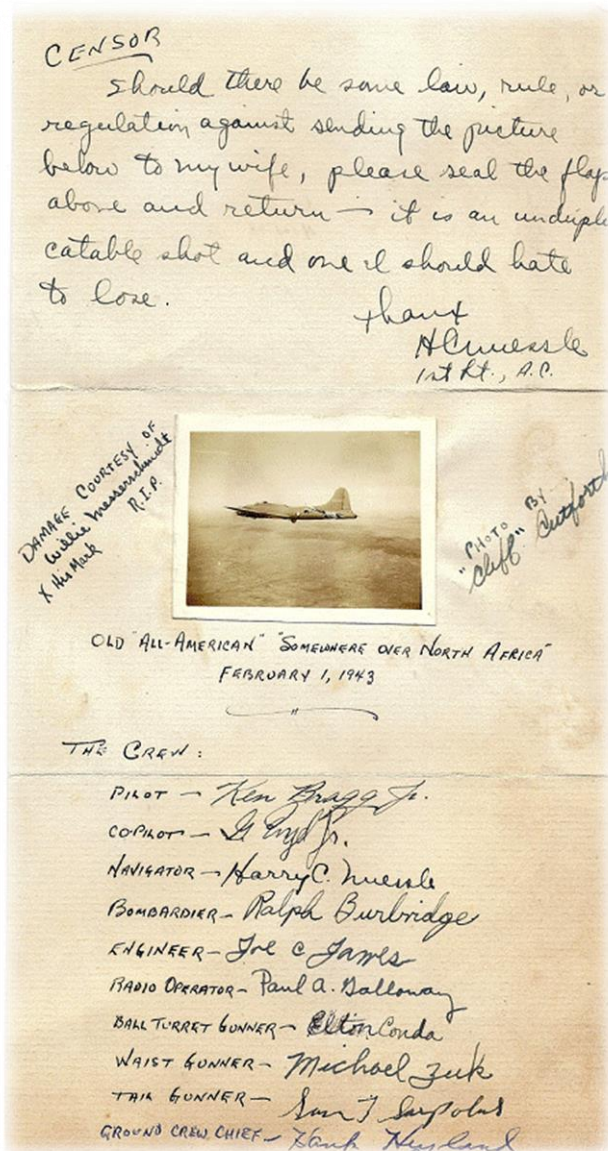
An enemy fighter attacking a 97th Bomb Group formation went out of control, probably with a wounded pilot then continued its crashing descent into the rear of the fuselage of a Fortress named All American, piloted by Lt. Kendrick R. Bragg, of the 414th Bomb Squadron.

When it struck, the fighter broke apart, but left some pieces in the B-17. The left horizontal stabilizer of the Fortress and left elevator were completely torn away. The two right engines were out and one on the left had a serious oil pump leak. The vertical fin and the rudder had been damaged, the fuselage had been cut almost completely through connected only at two small parts of the frame and the radios, electrical and oxygen systems were damaged. There was also a hole in the top that was over 16 feet long and 4 feet wide at its widest and the split in the fuselage went all the way to the top gunners turret.

Although the tail actually bounced and swayed in the wind and twisted when the plane turned and all the control cables were severed, except one single elevator cable still worked, and the aircraft still flew - miraculously!

The tail gunner was trapped because there was no floor connecting the tail to the rest of the plane. The waist and tail gunners used parts of the German fighter and their own parachute harnesses in an attempt to keep the tail from ripping off and the two sides of the fuselage from splitting apart.

While the crew was trying to keep the bomber from coming apart, the pilot continued on his bomb run and released his bombs over the





target.

When the bomb bay doors were opened, the wind turbulence was so great that it blew one of the waist gunners into the broken tail section. It took several minutes and four crew members to pass him ropes from parachutes and haul him back into the forward part of the plane. When they tried to do the same for the tail gunner, the tail began flapping so hard that it began to break off. The weight of the gunner was adding some stability to the tail section, so he went back to his position.



The turn back toward England had to be very slow to keep the tail from twisting off. They actually covered almost 70 miles to make the turn home. The bomber was so badly damaged that it was losing altitude and speed and was soon alone in the sky.



For a brief time, two more Me-109 German fighters attacked the All American. Despite the extensive damage, all of the machine gunners were able to respond to these attacks and soon drove off the fighters. The two waist gunners stood up with their heads sticking out through the hole in the top of the fuselage to aim and fire their machine guns. The tail

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gunner had to shoot in short bursts because the recoil was actually causing the plane to turn.



Allied P-51 fighters intercepted the All American as it crossed over the Channel and took one of the pictures shown. They also radioed to the base describing that the empennage was waving like a fish tail and that the plane would not make it and to send out boats to rescue the crew when they bailed out.

The fighters stayed with the Fortress taking hand signals from Lt. Bragg and relaying them to the base. Lt. Bragg signaled that 5 parachutes and the spare had been "used" so five of the crew could not bail out. He made the decision that if they could not bail out safely, then he would stay with the plane and land it.

Two and a half hours after being hit, the aircraft made its final turn to line up with the runway while it was still over 40 miles away. It descended into an emergency landing and a normal roll-out on its landing gear.



When the ambulance pulled alongside, it was waved off because not a single member of the crew had been injured. No one could believe that the aircraft could still fly in such a condition. The Fortress sat placidly until the crew all exited through the door in the fuselage and the tail gunner had climbed down a ladder, at which time the entire rear section of the aircraft collapsed onto the ground. The rugged old bird had done its job.





Another Blast from the Past

On This Day

I am just in time (2250 GMT on Thursday 16 August 2012) to advise that on this day, Thursday 16 August 1928, Hubert Broad took off from Stag Lane Aerodrome in DH.60G Moth G-EBWV at 5.30pm local time.

After a flare had been fired from the airfield, he landed again at 5.30pm local time on Friday 17 August, exactly 24 hours later, in time to clock-off for the weekend.

The flight was to publicise the reliability of the Gipsy engine. It was another coup for the Company's Sales Department engineered by Francis St. Barbe.

The aircraft had been fitted with additional tankage but at cruising rpm the engine had burned only 3 gallons per hour and landed with sufficient fuel for another four hours flight.

In their post-landing statements the Company declared that the aircraft had travelled 1,400 miles during which time the engine had completed 2.5 million revolutions for which each magneto had provided 10 million sparks. Hubert Broad had been refreshed by copious supplies of coffee, cocoa, sandwiches and boiled eggs. To ward off boredom he had read three novels but history does not reveal which they were. It might be fun to guess.

Stuart McKay

And the life of G-EBWV?

Operator: Lt Cdr Henry C MacDonald

Registration: G-EBWV

Fatalities: Fatalities: 2 / Occupants: 2

Airplane: Damaged beyond repair

Location: 600 miles East of St. Johns, Newfoundland, Canada

Phase: En route

Narrative:

c/no. 566 DH.60X [Cirrus II]: registerd G-EBWV to The De Havilland Aircraft Co Ltd, Stag Lane.



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No CofA issued since used for tests and completed as long-range endurance model; fitted with Gipsy I 7.28.

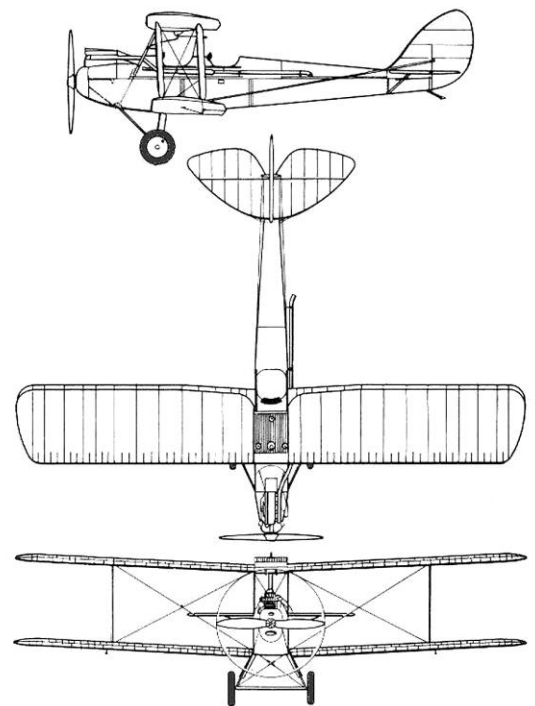
Achieved height record of 19,980 ft on 25.7.28, flown by Capt Geoffrey de Havilland (with Mrs de Havilland) from Stag Lane.

Fitted with extra fuel tanks and flown by Capt Hubert Broad for continuous 24 hours 16/17.8.28 at Stag Lane - an unofficial British lightplane endurance record.

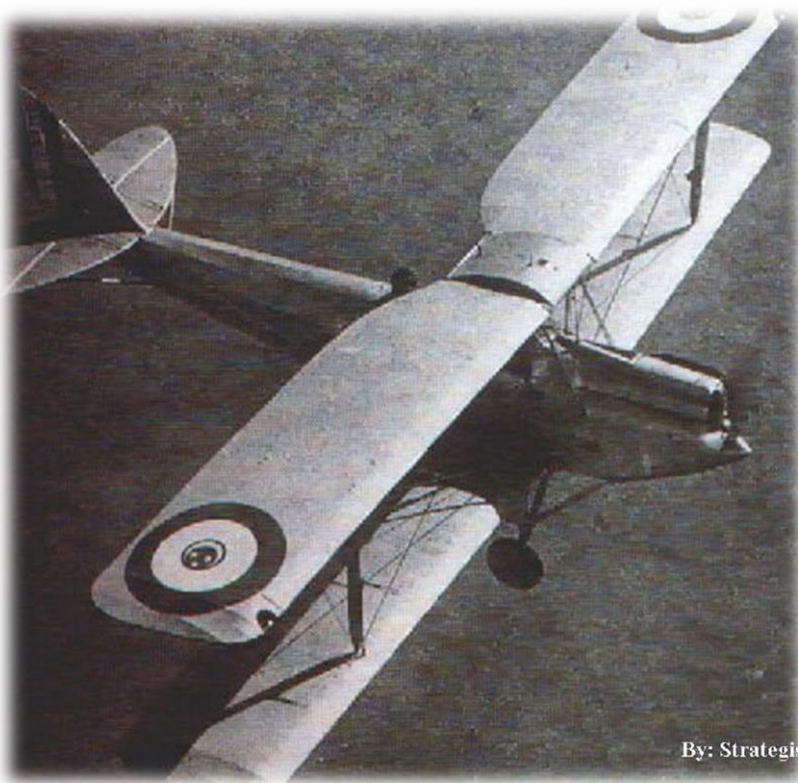
Loaned to or bought by Lt Cdr Henry C MacDonald for solo Transatlantic flight and shipped to Newfoundland from Liverpool, arriving 27.9.28. Departed St Johns, Newfoundland 17.10.28 and last seen some 7.5 hours later by the steamer Hardenberg at lat 53.29N: long 41.30W - 600 miles out to sea.

Presumed ditched in North Atlantic. Registration cancelled 9.10.28.

A sad end...



De Havilland DH-60 Moth



By: Strategist





In the Cockpit

There are two types of pilots. There are the mechanical, number-crunching, accountant type characters who are concerned with the cold, hard, analytical method of getting people and cargo from A to B. These are the career pilots, with gold bars striped across their shoulders, and the cool professionalism that comes with someone who holds the responsibility of taking packets of peanuts and weary travelers thousands of feet above the ground. They are important because, without this attitude, our own safety in flight would be compromised, and after all, flying is a job for them.

Then there is the other type of pilot, the romantic. This is the sort of person that sees an aircraft not as a series of steel tubes vacuum packed in fabric with an engine bolted to the front, but rather as a living, breathing machine. When they climb into their plane, it is not a series of nuts and bolts; it is a phoenix, which comes alive when the hanger doors are opened, and dies again when they are closed. It is something that rises from the ashes the moment we start the engine and begins to breathe with the fire of moving pistons and articulating control surfaces. This is a machine that has a soul and a heart.

But this idea doesn't hold true for all aeroplanes. Those hardy tin cans, which you often see tied down outside flying schools, abandoned to the elements, do not hold this same sort of character, this personality. They are moulds of the same, part of a production line that have been bred for a specific purpose and do not retain any sort of individual separation, besides their registration. They look the same as well, Cessna 150, Cessna 172, Cessna 152; each standing at attention, bravely anticipating what the next student will ultimately try to throw at them.

They remind me of a military regiment, emotionless, hard, cold and expressionless.

But one day, there is a gap in the line, and one of these soldiers has gone missing. Someone has hunted it down, and made it their own. This is where the aircraft goes through a change. From the time it feels the warmth and shelter of a hangar, it begins to resonate with its own sense of identity. It gets a cover to keep out the dust, perhaps, or a polish, and provides a new sense of amusement to the owner and his or her friends and family. It is the source of smiles and laughter, and carefree patterns in the sky. Its purpose is no longer methodical and sometimes abusive; and slowly from somewhere, this plane begins to develop its own soul.



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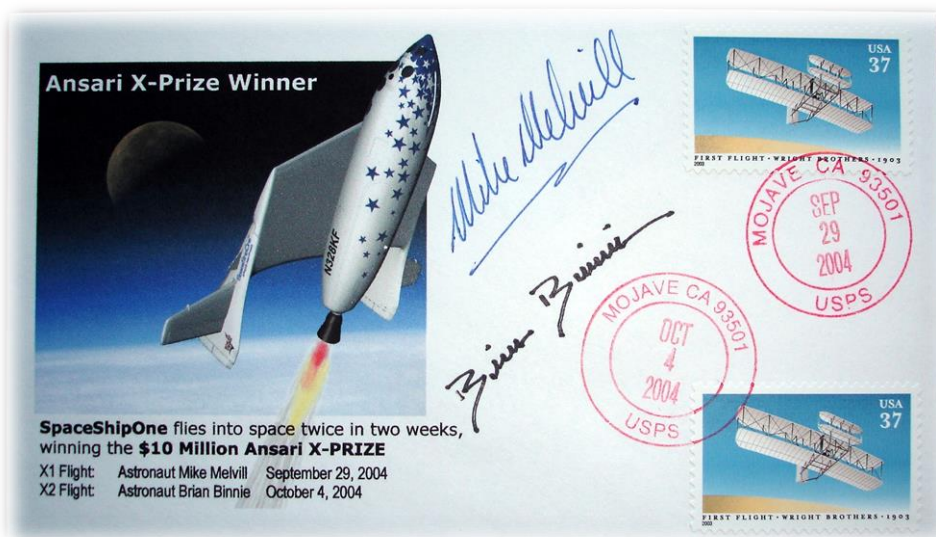


If you have your own aircraft, you'll understand what I mean. It's the reason why some of our 'toys' are christened with names that somehow suit their personality, and the same reason why they are spoken to in quiet whispers when no one is around. It is the reason why we thank them for their loyalty after a particularly good sortie around the airfield, and sometimes, we get the sense that a good landing is not because of the pilot, because of us, but because of how we have treated the aeroplane. It has been given to us, as a gift.

And some planes have more of a soul than others. Some even have universal souls. You have all seen a picture or perhaps a movie clip of a spitfire. In your mind's eye, you might have the sort of picture that I have – the sleek elliptical wings cutting the air like a samurai sword as it banks close to the ground. You can almost hear the Merlin engine screaming against mountings as it picks up speed. The plane echoes with energy and power and beauty. The wings flex against the G-Forces as the spitfire twists level and then gulps up high for an aileron roll. The sun glints from the cockpit, where the occupant is almost forgotten and it seems as if the airplane is flying of its own accord. The world tumbles inverted, and then spins level again. And just like that, with a gentle wing wag, the spitfire disappears from sight.

How can something as perfect, as beautiful, as inspiring as that, not have a soul? And what cascades through my thoughts even more, is how can a mere mortal have designed something so pure?

SpaceShipOne finds itself in the same class. Not so much because of what she looks like (although it embodies what a space ship should look like) but rather as a testimony to human ingenuity and performance. It is the sort of aircraft that kids would draw with crayons, trying to immortalize the sleek lines of space and speed and wonder. An, amazingly it is here, in reality. She will always remain as an icon of the Aerial Endeavour. SpaceShipOne would definitely have a girl's name, something smooth and sensuous. It strikes something into the heart of the imagination of small boys who always wanted to fly. It is a huge step forward to combat the huge step back that grounding Concorde may have produced. It stands up for progress, and is a slap in the face for the 'nanny society' which seems to have evolved around us. Putting Concorde out to pasture can be equated with man discovering the wheel, and then destroying it because someone's foot was run over by it. SpaceShipOne was inventing a new and better wheel. It was brought about by mind-expanding ideas, lateral thought, and the spirit of spit and string aviation. Who would have thought that going into space with





a stick und rudder controlled by the pilot himself would be achievable? I am at a loss for words when I read about that team and that experience...all I can say that my imagination clicks over with a faster beat because of that inspiration.

So in our overly cautious paradigm, we will still be able to nurture the boy's imagination within ourselves with the continuing advent of red tape and health and safety, because of something like SpaceShipOne. I should not be concerned that we could get to the point where elastic band aircraft are deemed dangerous in the hands of youngsters, or where sport aviation is strangled because of too many insurance implications because it won't be? It won't because of people like Burt Rutan and Mike Melvill. Spit and string aviation will always be a reality in the future because it is too precious to lose. And we will be able to own or have a share in our own aircraft, complete with heart and soul.

Boyhood dreams that are reflected in films like Stephen Spielberg's 'Empire of the Sun' are rekindled by these endeavours. Do you remember the part where a Mustang performs a low fly-past amidst the shouting of a bowled-over boy. That moment is burnt into my memory, because its part of why I wanted to fly in the first place, and I, for one, don't want to lose that innocence that goes along with my own skybound experiences. In this film, the boy screams with enthusiasm, 'P-51 Mustang, ferrari of the skies, whooooo'. He wishes he could be and can probably even see himself in that plane, free. He has given the craft a name, something fierce, war-like, but beautiful. It has a label which a thirteen-year-old would think strikes fear into the hearts of all. It has a soul, a life, and the mustang is equated to a person in his terms.

He will be this second type of pilot.

These are the figures that we cannot afford to lose, the grassroots men and women, which are actually just bigger versions of the girls and boys whose imaginations are always

turned upwards. It is the pilot that sees aeroplanes as companions, as friends, and evoke a personality within them. They are the grown up versions of boys with balsa wood models, that can see themselves cutting the sky into ribbons as they twirl their favorite planes with a flick of the wrist as they run in their gardens. They are the same people who stop what they are doing and can't help themselves but to glance up when an aeroplane flies overhead. They are the ones who constantly watch the sky, and instead of seeing blue and white, see themselves with stick in one hand and throttle in the other, swimming about in it. They visualize themselves flying around mountains and skimming the sea when they are on holiday.

The pilot in them is always flying.

Courtney Watson





Of this and That

Alan and Ian Hanes are flying their Supercub! It's taken a while, but she is up in the air and they are enjoying every minute of it.

The aircraft is registered ZU-ASI (ex ZS-LEV with parts from ZS-CLU and ZS-CDR). It is a 1963 Piper PA-18-150 Super Cub and has been rebuilt by the Hanes brothers over the past 20 years.



WANTED

We are trying to brighten up the clubhouse, and therefore, if you have any pictures or memorabilia that you would like to loan or donate to the club for display purposes, please contact me via email on cwatson@stithian.com

2013 CALENDARS

We are putting together a 2013 calendar for JLPC featuring pictures of all of the interesting aircraft that frequent the airfield. Please email any high res images that you wish to be considered for inclusion to Mike Gill at mike@rainbowcheetah.co.za or myself at cwatson@stithian.com

JOIN OUR FACEBOOK GROUP

More details of what is happening at Baragwanath can be found if you join our Facebook group: Baragwanath Airfield FASY





For Sale

TIGER MOTH BOTSWANA SAFARI DVDS

DVDs 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>



PRINTS BY STEVE MCCURRACH

If you liked the print featured on page 5 of the newsletter or if you are interested in any of Steve's superb aerial photographs, please contact him via email at steve@airserv.co.za Or phone 082 891 1689



PJ's
RESTAURANT

AT BARAGEE

POWER CHECK
breakfast
R 25.00

SATURDAYS 'N SUNDAYS | KITCHEN 09:00 to 15:00 | BAR 12:00 to 18:00
EASY | BARAGWANATH AERODROME | 083 707 6446