

Baragwanath

Barometer



May 2010



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Editorial

So it's that time of the year again when I try to put together more of the Baragwanath Chronicles, with the stories from the pilots that frequent our little airfield.

As always, I would like to encourage material of any kind which you might like to share with the rest of us 'grassroots' aviators.

From my side, it seems that aviation is always going to run its path through my life as at the moment I am in the process of putting together a Tiger Moth trip through to Botswana. It's the sort of thing that is so exciting that just thinking about it leaves me with butterflies in my stomach. I have dreams at night (and sometimes during the day when I should be doing work) of biplanes over crusty salt pans, flying low level over flamingos. Sometimes I dream of spotting elephant over the marshy Okavango Swamps and then there is the image of piloting a Tiger over Victoria Falls, the most iconic river in Africa.

I guess it's my romantic view of things that keeps me going with projects like this and anyway, what is life without a dream that you are busy making a reality?

On another note, this year has thrown some very strange weather patterns at us, with unseasonal rains, cold snaps, and some windy days that has leave the airfield untouched on a Sunday.

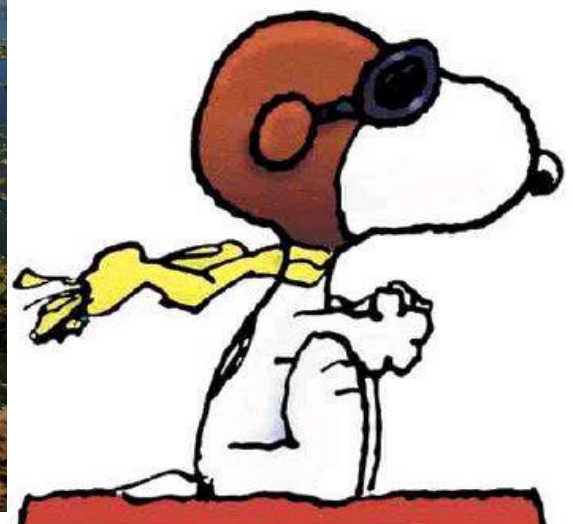
Hopefully the worst is over and judging by the weather at the Rand Airport Extravaganza last weekend, it seems like we are heading into a good winter.

Hopefully I haven't spoken too soon.

I'm taking advantage of these blissful blue skies before the anti-flying police of the world cup come and take away all of our fun, and with a circuit holding about seven or eight aircraft on Sunday, it seems a lot of other people are doing the same.

So, with my piece said, have gentle landings and fill every day with some sort of flying.

Courtney Watson





Harvard Project

Thanks to Noel, Mike and others for the gargantuan efforts in getting this project off the ground (and for the following words):

After languishing in a hangar at Baragee for 16 or 17 Years, Harvard 7732 is finally out for all to see. These photos, (courtesy Peter Skellern and Fred Weaver), show the "first" day's work on 17 April 2010.



Thanks to Peter and Anne Pickard for providing the lunch. Also to Fred and Liza Weaver for some of the photos (the Weavers were visiting from the USA), Peet Taljaard and his kids for their help and of course the members who gave a hand.
Noel

This machine was a gate guard at 68 Air School in Lyttleton.

If memory serves me correctly, the mounting holes for the pole were drilled right through the main spar.

The static display will provide hours of joy for the kids and later on their children who will be able to "fly" this machine. The project is in the interest of aviation and it might spark enthusiasm in some youngsters.

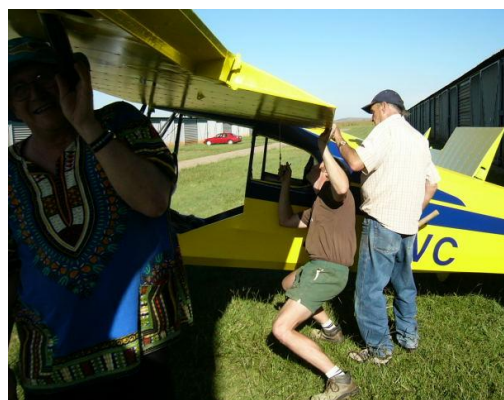
Mike Gill is also one of the "drivers" of the Harvard Project.



CVH and his Aeronca

I challenge anyone to find a brighter and prettier aerie. Chris' efforts have certainly paid off in refurbishing his Aeronca. Ask him if you can have a look at it sometime – just bring some shades.

Chris no longer needs a light in his hangar – he has a bright yellow aerie to light it up!





Fabric Covering Demo

On 6th March, Chris also organised a fabric covering demonstration. It had a very good response and the hands on workshop ensured that everybody really learnt a lot. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the event, but the responses were all overwhelming.



Many thanks must go to Bruce Perkins for these photographs (and others) which is a consistent feature in this newsletter.





Newsletter Feedback

An email from an old Baragee Member...it is amazing how word travels worldwide via things like the Internet.

Have a read...

Hello Courtney,

Your name, e-mail address and a copy of the recent Baragwanath Barometer was forwarded to me by Stuart McKay; I have been a member of the Moth Club since its earliest days.

I really enjoyed reading all about the 'new' Barag and the club still functioning. My association with both go back a very long way as my Dad was a foundation member of JLPC in the 1920's, and I spent some the happiest days of my life at Baragwanath.

Together with my younger brother John, we owned Tiger Moth ZS-BXA, and I gained my SAAF Wings under the great Fritz Johl's tutelage. George Gray was the club manager in those days and he and I became Rand Mines company pilots flying the DH Heron, ZS-DLO. I eventually became the Club Captain, then CFI and eventually Chairman of the Committee. On leaving to emigrate to Canada I was honoured with Honorary Life Membership, proposed by Hansie Haarof.

I was instrumental in starting the Johannesburg Soaring Center, which in effect the gliding section of the club. The 1951 South African Gliding Competitions were held at Baragwanath.

And now I have just received the latest Moth Club magazine; wonderful narrative of modern Baragwanath life and Tiger

flying.....amazing that old BSF is still airworthy and active; I flew it many times and see from my logbook that I used it to tow a glider from Barag to Bloemfontein on December 4th 1952.





Yes, indeed it can be quite a small world. When I first retired almost 20 years ago, Jean and I had a wonderful trip to SA and all my old stomping grounds. We were royally entertained one evening at a Baragwanath party held at the Rand Flying Club. Your Dad may well have been there? My dear old friend Philip Hesselson was still the Chairman, and he had taken over from Russell Anderson 25 year before and Russell had taken over from me when I moved to Canada.

Another character, Alan Hindle was in attendance. I had taught him aerobatics years ago and in return he painted this wonderful picture of my Tiger; it is oil on canvas four foot by three foot, and one of my treasured possessions.

Till next, blue skies,
Bill Teague

Bill also attached some interesting history about JLPC to his email, which you can peruse overleaf.





JOHANNESBURG LIGHT PLANE CLUB

BARAGWANATH AERODROME

TELEGRAMS: "AERO"
TELEPHONE 32-2231/2

P.O. Box 6033
JOHANNESBURG.



THE JOHANNESBURG LIGHT PLANE CLUB

On the 7th of December, 1926, in the Selborne Hall, Johannesburg, a large and enthusiastic gathering of citizens unanimously agreed to the following resolution:-

381411

'That this meeting of citizens, convened by His Worship the Mayor of Johannesburg, is definitely of opinion that for national reasons the time has arrived for the active promotion and encouragement of aviation in this country, and to that end, and in order to provide members of both sexes of this community with the necessary facilities at a reasonable cost, agrees to establish forthwith a Flying Club, to be known as the Johannesburg Light 'Plane Club.'

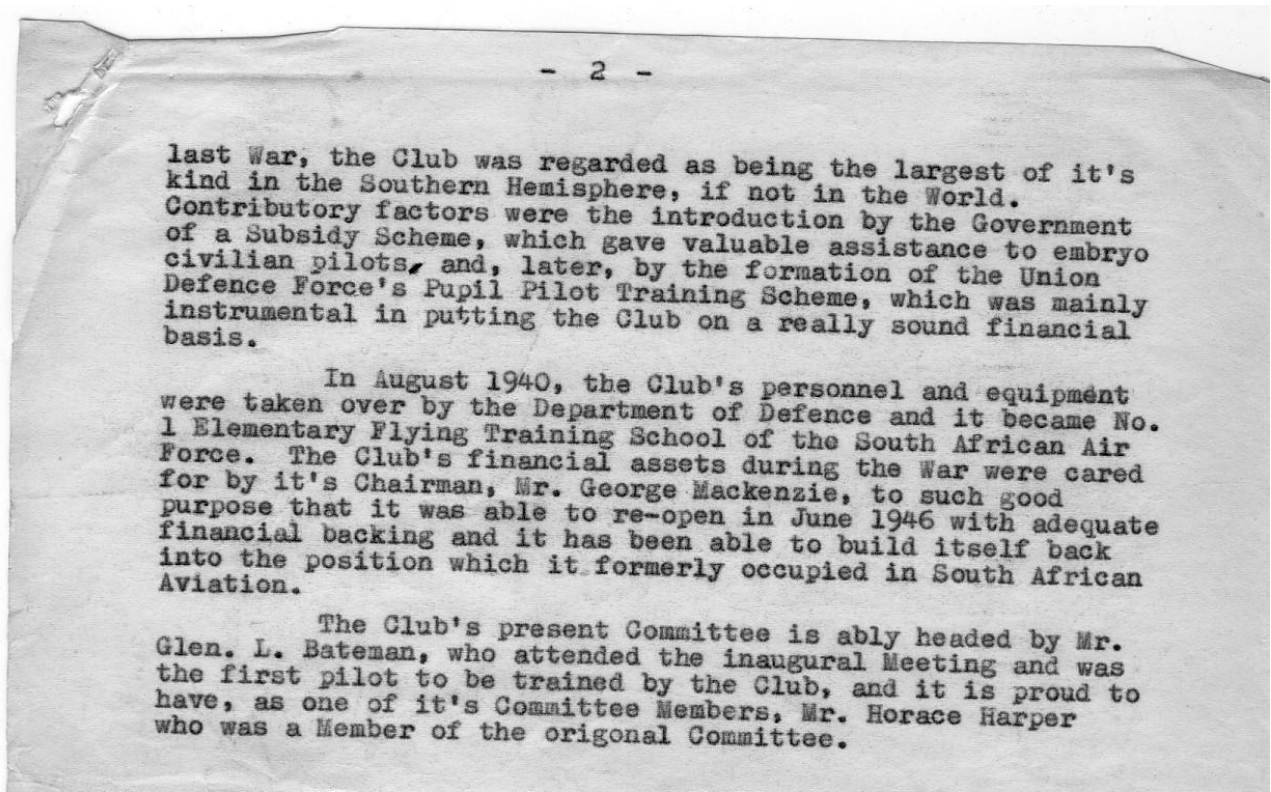
A hundred and thirty members were enrolled and the following Committee appointed:- His Worship the Mayor of Johannesburg, Councillor Alf Law. Palmer; Mr. J. Christie, M.L.A.; Mr. W. Seals Wood, President of the Chamber of Commerce; Dr. Samuel Evans, Chairman of the Crown Mines Ltd.; Mrs. Pemberton; Messers C. R. Thompson; S. M. Wood; P. L. Lindup; H. Harper; W. French; E. Millin; G. Makepeace; R. Douglas, Honorary Secretary and H. D. Evans, Honorary Treasurer.

Messers Crown Mines Ltd. made available to the Club a site, suitable as an Aerodrome, on the Potchefstroom Road, - the now famous Baragwanath Aerodrome, - and the Club enjoys to this day the continued support and interest of this kindly and generous organisation.

The South African Air Force, headed by Colonel Sir Pierre van Ryneveld, lent their support in the raising of funds by organising a very successful Air Pageant, the first of it's kind ever to be held in South Africa, which gave the Club the necessary initial financial impetus and publicity and enabled it to purchase it's first aircraft, a D.H. Cirrus Moth, and engage it's first Pilot Instructor, G. W. Bellin, under the Club Captaincy of Rod Douglas.

Many famous personalities gave invaluable assistance to this new venture and the present Club owes a deep debt of gratitude to those early enthusiasts, both men and women, who refused to be beaten by difficulties, mainly financial. Their efforts were not in vain as, shortly before the outbreak of the

*which arrived on the 31st of October 1927,
See attached*



New Aeries

Noel Otten

Thanks to Kelly for this photograph of Noel's Tiger, awaiting flying wires; that makes three tigers at Baragee:

And the late Peter v d Poel's Draine Turbulent arriving and then being assembled. It is for sale, so if you are interested, contact Noel:





Flying to “The Grand Rand Airshow”

This last Sunday, as many of you may well know, was the Grand Rand Airshow. I had some time off, so my brother and I decided to make an appearance and fly across together in the Tiger Moth and the C140. As is custom, we flipped for who would choose to fly what aircraft.

I won.

I chose the Tiger Moth, but forgot about the weather.

So, at 05:30, I was at my brother’s house, blinking away the sleep and prying my eyelids open. Night had not yet evaporated from the sky and there was a haunting quiet of silent streets.

As we made our way along the deserted highway, a few lazy stars still twinkling at the start of daybreak, I looked at the temperature gauge in the car. It read eight degrees.

And I was going to be in an open cockpit.

My brother just smiled.

By the time we had turned off onto the Potch-Jo’burg

road, the sun had managed to melt away most of the darkness and in the valleys of rivulets and waterways, mist bellowed in clouds of steam, blurring the details of the roadside.

At the airfield, I was rubbing my hands and breathing out husks of smoke, trying to ward away the cold.

Eventually the Tiger was unwrapped from her cocoon of covers and outside. Despite an orange ball of sunlight hovering around the horizon, the temperature hadn’t picked up at all and I made preparations to keep myself warm by putting on a woollen flying jacket and wrapping my neck in a silk scarf.

I’ve never been one for posing with a scarf like I was a ghost of World War One coming back from the dead, but today I felt it a necessity.





It took some time for the engine to warm up once the propeller had been swung, and in the slipstream, my clothing didn't do much to beat away the cold.

As I lined up on the runway and took power, though, the cold was replaced by a grin. Stick back, and the long shadow beneath me crept further and further out of my grasp. Patrick took off

shortly behind me, and with a long, lazy turn, I formed up on his left hand side.

Beneath the two of us, the mist had not yet dissolved and the ground was blotted with what looked like cloud, silver and golden in the seven o'clock sun.

I flew tucked behind the Cessna's wingtip, and without a breath of wind, it felt like the two aircraft were joined together by invisible bonds. Every so often I glanced out of the corner of my eyes to the world below, feeling like a spirit floating in the sky.

The cold was beginning to resurface, though, and my cheeks felt still and clammy. I'm sure they were beginning to turn blue. My fingers were frozen to the stick and throttle, and any movement felt like the cracking of an ice tray. Speaking was another problem, as it felt like I had eaten too much ice-cream and my tongue



was swollen with frostbite. I had developed an interesting lisp.

I pulled the scarf up over my neck and tucked it more snugly under the flying jacket, hoping in vain to trap in some of my body heat.

My teeth were beginning to chatter and all I could think about was how warm my brother looked in the Cessna 140. Compared to the "good old days" I'm sure I was coming off as a bit soft.

Around Rand, my cold spell was broken by the calculated calls of incoming aircraft. They dotted the skies, as if someone had flicked the bristles of a paintbrush across the sky and the flecks of paint had somehow stayed there. Patrick and I broke formation and I drifted back for long finals on 17.

At the end of the runway, I saw rows of photographers lined up, and I felt a lump in



my throat as I thought about the old mantra of watched landings being the most inelegant. And then things went white.

I was on short finals with the trees before the threshold just beneath the Tiger's wheels.

And I couldn't see a thing.

The scarf had somehow managed to become unravelled and opened like a spinnaker over my face. I let go of the throttle and tore away at the cumbersome material with my left hand until eventually it came loose. Somehow I had managed to stay on runway heading, and the scarf was whipping in the propwash, pulling my head further left out of the cockpit.

My graceful decent was marred by this spectacle of idiocy and it seemed I was going to prove that landing mantra true.

With the scarf strangling my neck, my goggles and headset skewed on my face, I managed to get my hand back on the throttle and with a blip of power, the wheels touched tar, with barely a sound.

The airshow was one that most will remember for the fireballs, the eleven Harvard formation, the smoke, the aerobatics and the crisp formations. But for me, I will remember my first bit of blind flying and the time I've spent on Avcom trying to see if anyone took a picture of that tormented Tiger pilot.

Courtney Watson





Rand Airshow Photo Spread





Wings on the Vaal

Patrick submitted these photographs taken when he was flying with a SA Express friend over the Vaal River...a trip well worth doing. They incorporated a breakfast in Parys and perhaps we need to have a gathering there in the future...



Welcome from the Chairman

Albeit a bit overdue, a special welcome to Baragee must go to the following new members:

Anne Pickard, Neville Jacobson, Richard Greyling, Gavin van der Bergh, Rob Dow, Alan Creedy, Theuns van Vuuren

Blue skies to all of you...





Review

The Great Waldo Pepper

BY ROGER EBERT / January 1, 1975

Waldo Pepper is, as he admits with a shy smile, the second- greatest flier in the world. The greatest is Ernst Kessler, the German ace who shot down 70 foes in World War I. But that was more than a decade ago, and now Kessler, as much as Pepper, is reduced to peddling \$5 plane rides and doing stunt flying during the last years of barnstorming. The pay isn't good, but the work is lousy: "I'm not selling good flying," explains the proprietor of Dillhoefer's Air Circus. "I'm selling sudden death."

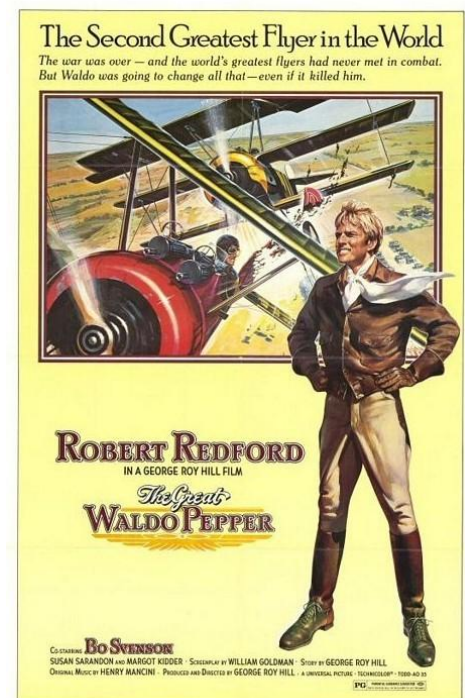
Even so, the air circus at times finds itself performing before groups of half a dozen agape schoolboys. The days when pilots could land on Main Street are over; the airlines and the air mail are established; the government wants to regulate flying and give it an image of greater safety. The world is closing in on Waldo Pepper. And, as played by Robert Redford, he hardly knows it: He's a simple, brave, boyish soul who is loyal to his friends and who dreams of being the first man to perform the dangerous outside loop.

"The Great Waldo Pepper" is a film of charm and excitement, a sort of bittersweet farewell to a time when a man with an airplane could make a living taking the citizens of Nebraska on their first five minute flights. It doesn't have any big notions about the passing of that era, or of the barnstormers, who are seen as overgrown kids with wonderful toys that fly. The Director, Hill, doesn't cheat in the stunt-flying sequences, which include unfaked

footage of a biplane flying down a village street with a few feet of clearance and a petrified heroine clinging to one wing. This stunt sets up the trickiest scene in the film, when the heroine freezes with fright and the great Waldo flies up in another airplane, climbs out on a wing, transfers to the first plane, walks out to the girl and attempts to pull her to safety.

At an airshow, as a plane flies past the stands with Waldo standing on the wing, a member of the audience observes: "Fellow came through here last week doing that standing on his head." Waldo's best hope is that his friend and designer, Newt (Geoffrey Lewis), will be able to perfect a monoplane with strong enough wings to do the outside loop. And alarming rumors float westward that the legendary Kessler (Bo Brundin) also hopes to be the first with that trick.

Kessler is successful, after developments I'd better not give away, but then both Kessler and Pepper find themselves in Hollywood doing stunt flying for a living. Kessler's heroics in a famous World War I dogfight (which have deeply impressed Waldo) are now just the stuff for a potboiler movie, with Kessler flying his own stunts but a fatuous young actor playing him.





And then Kessler and Pepper square off in the skies for a recreation of that famous battle, and somehow it becomes real....

Aviation Humour

Some actual maintenance complaints submitted by US Air Force pilots, and the replies from the maintenance crews.

Problem: Target Radar hums

Solution: Reprogrammed Target Radar with the lyrics

Problem: "Left inside main tire almost needs replacement."

Solution: "Almost replaced left inside main tire."

Problem: "Test flight OK, except autoland very rough."

Solution: "Autoland not installed on this aircraft."

Problem: "The autopilot doesn't."

Signed off: "IT DOES NOW."

Problem: "Something loose in cockpit."

Solution: "Something tightened in cockpit."

Problem: "Evidence of hydraulic leak on right main landing gear."

Solution: "Evidence removed."

Problem: "DME volume unbelievably loud."

Solution: "Volume set to more believable level."



Problem: "Dead bugs on windshield."

Solution: "Live bugs on order."

Problem: "#2 Propeller seeping prop fluid

Solution: "#2 Propeller seepage normal - #1 #3 and #4 propellers lack normal seepage

Problem: "Autopilot in altitude hold mode produces a 200 fpm descent."

Solution: "Cannot reproduce problem on ground."

Problem: "IFF inoperative."

Solution: "IFF always inoperative in OFF mode."

Problem: "Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick."

Solution: "That's what they're there for."

Problem: "Number three engine missing."

Solution: "Engine found on right wing after brief search."



Parting Shot



Thanks to Patrick Watson, taken from a Canadian Regional Jet flying into George with SA Express

I hope that you have enjoyed this latest edition of the 'Baragwanath Barometer'. As always, there has been quite a lot of Tiger Moth and Cessna 140 orientated musings, and I would welcome chatter about anything else that is flying related. The next issue should be coming out at the end of the World Cup in August, so please email cwatson@stithian.com with anything that could be included.

Until then, blue skies!

