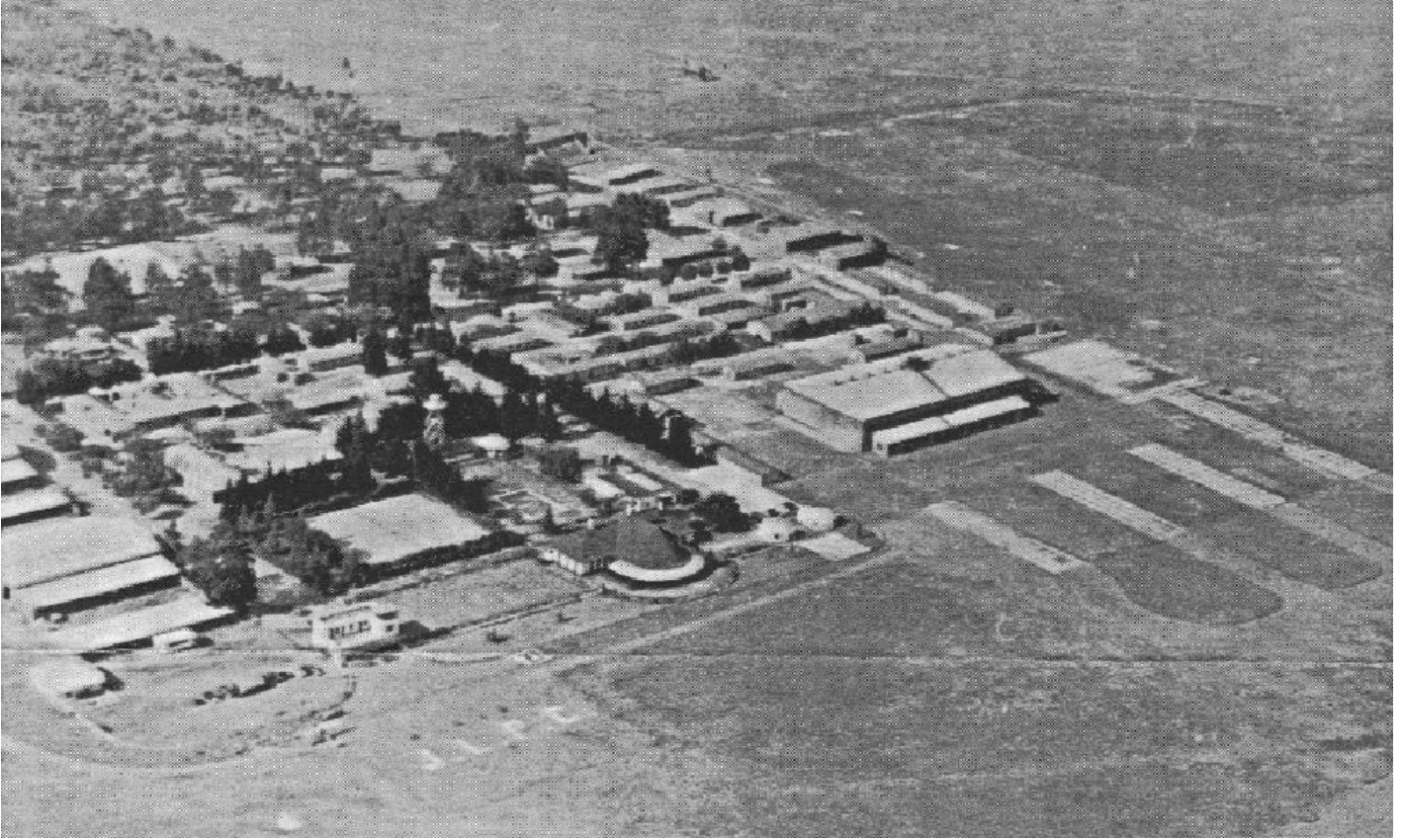


THE JOHANNESBURG LIGHT PLANE CLUB AND BARAGWANATH

Memories by Bill Teague



Baragwanath was the birth place and cradle of South African aviation; certainly in the light aeroplane category.

My association with Baragwanath and the Johannesburg Light Plane Club goes back to its inception as my father was a foundation member. I arrived on the scene on the 6th of May 1950 when I ferried newly acquired Tiger Moth registration ZS-BXA, jointly owned by myself and my younger brother, from Rand Airport to Baragwanath & we joined JLPC. Individual hangars cost 4 pounds a month, which included the aircraft being washed each month!



de Havilland DH.82A Tiger Moth ZS-BXA.



de Havilland DH.82A Tiger Moth ZS-BXA. Painting by Alan Hindle

ZS-BXA had come from the SAAF for 25 pounds via Reg Martel at Rand airport for an additional 125 pounds to cover the conversion to the civil register, which basically consisted of spraying it silver.

The 1950's were the golden years of flying in SA and JLPC lead the way with wonderful facilities and personnel & members.

It sported a superb club house, two tennis courts, two squash courts, a great swimming pool, an intimate cosy bar, accommodations and an elegant dining room. In retrospect it was my salad days.

The social highlight was the annual New Year's Eve Ball; strictly formal. Another annual event was the children's Christmas party with Father Christmas arriving by air in a different aerodyne every year.

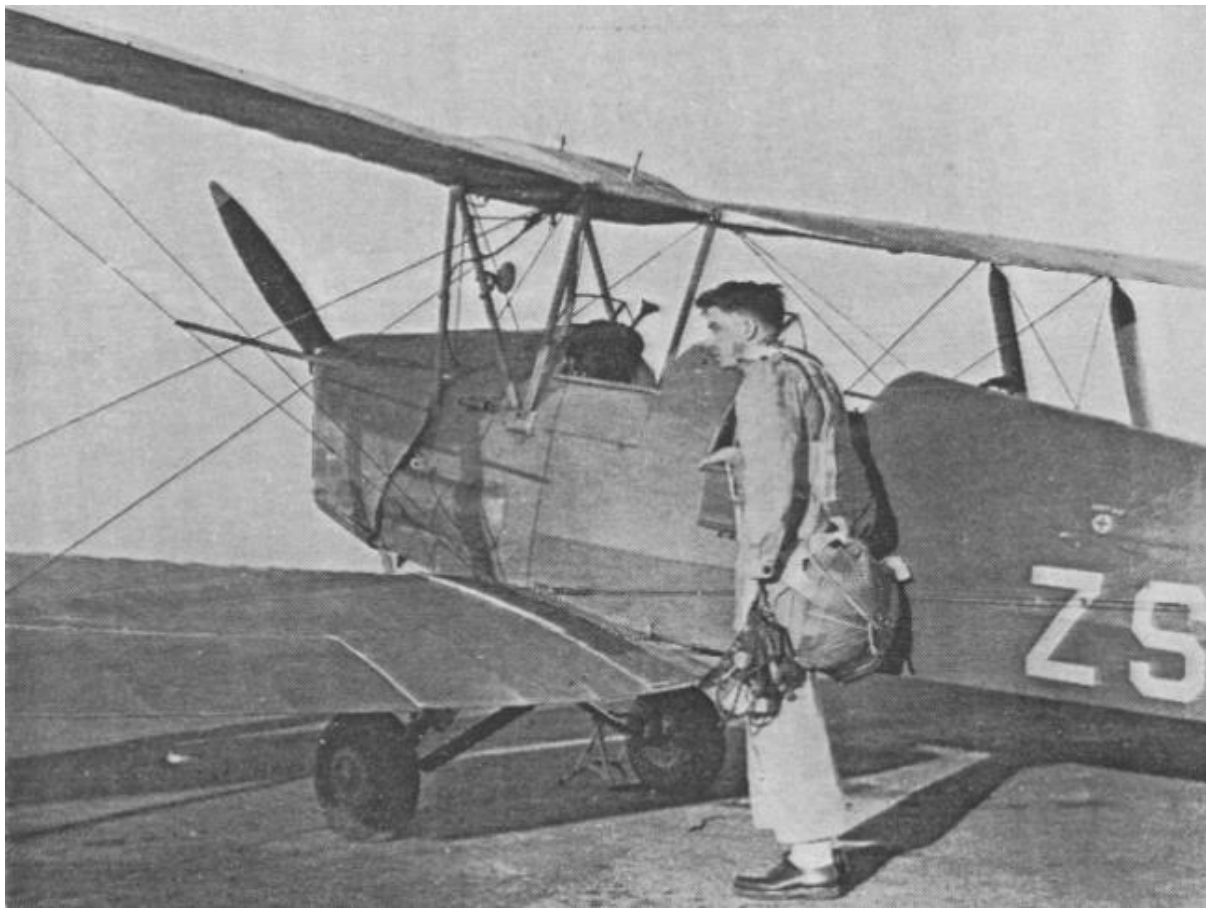


JLPC 1950's New Year's Eve Ball.

Second from left is Yvonne van denDool, now living in Hermanus, fourth is me!

Back row, the late Eleanor Turner-Douglas, and next to her is the late Lin Middleton who ended up as a Rear Admiral in the Royal Navy and was captain of the aircraft carrier "Hermes" during the Falklands war. Have forgotten the names of the others!

It had the best in instructors, the likes of George Gray, Hansie Haarhoff, "Boots" O'Reilly, Val Andre, & "boss" Stan Gray, and the legendary "Fritz" Johl. And a host of zany characters like the Arbuthnot brothers, Nigel & Bruce; Tubby Singleton; Bill Fortuin, Ian McClunna & Freddie Farrell, to name a few.



Avid aviator and pupil pilot Bill Teague about to levitate in the "Ape"
South African Air Force Auxiliary training at Baragwanath in 1952.



SAAF Pupil Pilot Bill Teague 1952.

A very active South African Air Force (SAAF) Reserve Squadron; always referred to as the "weekend warriors" operated a fleet of Harvard's from one half of the big hangar, (to this day the only original structure still in existence) while the gliders were hangared in the other half.



de Havilland DH.82A Tiger Moth ZS-BRC.
Johannesburg Light Plane Club, Baragwanath 1950's.

The gliding section named the Johannesburg Soaring Center (the name I proposed and was adopted) was extremely active, with such wonderful personalities as "Sparky" Davidson, Ken Newman, Pat Beatty, Helli Lasch and Peter Leppan.

Bill Teague.

16 March 2013