

## AN OBITUARY - JIM EMPSON

N.J.R.EMPSON or Jim to his many Friends sadly passed away on Friday 13th October aged 85 and with his passing one of the leading lights of local aviation has made his last flight. Born in Gamlingay Cambs in 1932 he spent his teenage days watching Wellingtons and Mosquitos flying over East Anglia. Too young to serve in the war (in which his Brothers mostly left to serve from Dunkirk, D-Day, Burma to Africa) he followed his Father (RNAS & an early RAF member in WW1) by joining the RAF in the early 1950s for his National Service. He wanted to go to the Korean War but much to his annoyance ended up at Bassingbourne nearly back home!

On leaving the RAF in which he specialised in Aerial Photography he returned to the family Garage before starting work in a Photographic shop in Cambridge. Deciding to do his own thing he looked for a location to open a shop and found in 1964 the premises 15 St Matthews Street in Ipswich which became Anglia Cameras for four decades and was very well known to real photographers for his knowledgeable and professional service.

The business did well enough for Jim to take up what had always been a passion, aeroplanes, learning to fly from Ipswich Airport in the late 1960s. He acquired a part share in a few aeroplanes before acquiring his first Piper Cub which he spent a summer restoring back into its wartime colours winning a prize for best restoration. (it still flies locally).

He flew as often as many people drove their car, nearly every weekend and many summer evenings

Many will remember Fly ins he organised at Ipswich and even the very last flights / fly in at Martlesham itself.

Even on the demise of flying from Ipswich he carried on with arranging flying events, Pilots dinners, trips out for MHAS members of which he was one of the "Originals" and other notable events through Anglia Cameras or Flying.

Perhaps the most notable was his involvement with so many American veterans who returned to their local fields and many Piper Cub fly bys happened during these visits. Jim remembers many a tear with these incredible old men who knew it would probably be their last visit to remember those incredible, dangerous but comradely days.

Although many could find him difficult at times, he came from the "Old School" his heart was well and truly not only local but local flying and there were few who made such an impact locally on aviation in the area.

Dad has asked for some of his ashes to be put on the Bank here at Martlesham where he spent many happy hours with you all.

Dad requested no funeral or fuss, he didn't think he had done anything special enough, but has provided something extra for our tea break tonight. I would like to thank many of you who were such good friends to him but especially Ken Oatley who had known Dad for fifty years and Malcolm List who helped him so much recently. I am pleased to say he suffered very little pain but in the last year or so became a bit annoyed with himself at a failing memory and physical ability which occasionally extended in a sharp word to others ! My apologies to a few waiters and others on his behalf !

But overall local aviation would have been much the poorer without his five decades of input which it must be said he thoroughly enjoyed himself

Jim Empson 1932-2017  
"Gone Flying"

David Empson