

## TONY PEARCE - 1945 - 2014

Sadly, Tony Pearce, all round aviation enthusiast and owner of the ubiquitous G-ALEH, died on 10 November, just a couple of months short of his 70th birthday.

It was inevitable that Tony would become enveloped in aviation. The Family involvement began in 1919, when a great uncle acquired a DH6, which was followed by 3 Avro 504's, and the die was cast. Tony's father worked for Vickers at Weybridge and the family home was in Byfleet barely a couple of miles away.

Tony's entire working life was spent in the Operations Department of British Airways, where he was involved in fleet scheduling. This allowed ample opportunity for pursuing his enthusiast interests, and he took full advantage of BA's extensive network by exploring South America, and other far flung corners of the globe. BA's Flying Club operated from Booker, and he learnt to fly on their fleet of PA-38 Tomahawks.

1982 saw the acquisition of his own aircraft, PA-17 G-ALEH, which he based at Redhill. The Vagabond became a familiar sight at fly ins all over the UK, in addition to Denmark, Switzerland, Germany, France and Belgium. In 1991, he moved the PA-17 to White Waltham, where it currently resides.

He was possibly the ultimate aviation enthusiast, as apart from his spotting, photography and flying, he was also a member of the LAA, Vintage Piper Club, Air Britain, West London, Aero Club, Brookland's Museum. He was also an irrepressible "type flyer", constantly searching for that extra different type to fly in.

HIS FINAL FLIGHT WAS FROM THE LAA SYWELL EVENT ON 31 AUGUST, back to White Waltham. Fly Ins in the UK will not be the same without Tony and the Vagabond, and famously at Popham posters had appeared stating that "it's not a Fly in unless G-ALEH arrives."