

# BRENT'S TRABANT 601 by Bengt Collin

## Somewhere in Europe

On a sunny day with clear blue skies, he was hit by lightning. It was a strange feeling, it was very bright around him, he didn't hear anything at all and everything appeared in slow motion. Suddenly he could see clearly again and in front of him it was the Trabant 601. Two days later he managed to track down the owner, an old gentleman dressed in sandals, brown socks, lederhosen, an orange shirt and a green Tyrol hat. The price was 800€, it was a 1989 model. The car was in poor condition, but possible to restore. He bought it.

## At the destination airport

"What do you think Sid", Brent asked with a big smile on his face? It took me two years of hard work, but now it's in mint condition. The Trabant 601 was carefully parked on its own at a remote parking lot outside the airport. However they could see it clearly from their position in front of the ATC building. "Looks good from here", Sid replied. "Is the engine powerful?" "Yep" Brent replied, "27 hp at 4200 rpm". "That's impressive" Sid said with irony, but Brent didn't notice.

## At the departure airport

The technical crew and the Captain had been delayed and were now arriving together in a green SAAB 95. He was the First Officer, for the moment the only pilot on the flight deck. He had carefully prepared for the flight well ahead of the planned departure time. No problems were expected – the en route and destination airport weather were excellent. Now they would be leaving late, so to save time, he requested start up as the Captain sat down in the left seat. He had already received the departure clearance and the details had been carefully entered into the Flight Management System. The purpose of the flight was to carry out a standard scheduled check of the ILS and VOR at the destination airport. The Captain was somewhat concerned at the late departure – they needed to complete all the checks today, knowing that they were due at another airport the following day.

## In the destination Tower

Paul was together with Liza in the Tower. This was the standard procedure, two controllers. The traffic didn't require ATC at all hours but today it was busy. The good weather had inspired many light aircraft pilots to fly. Not that he couldn't cope with it, he preferred it that way instead of long hours with very little to do.

## In the destination Tower building

Sid opened the door to the ATC building with his key card. He and Brent had started working at the airport some two weeks ago. They had to clean the ground floor and the tower cabin. As this took only two hours, their tasks also included cleaning other buildings at the airport too. Brent loved his job title 'Household Technician'; it was the best job title he had ever held. They started cleaning downstairs.



## BENGT COLLIN

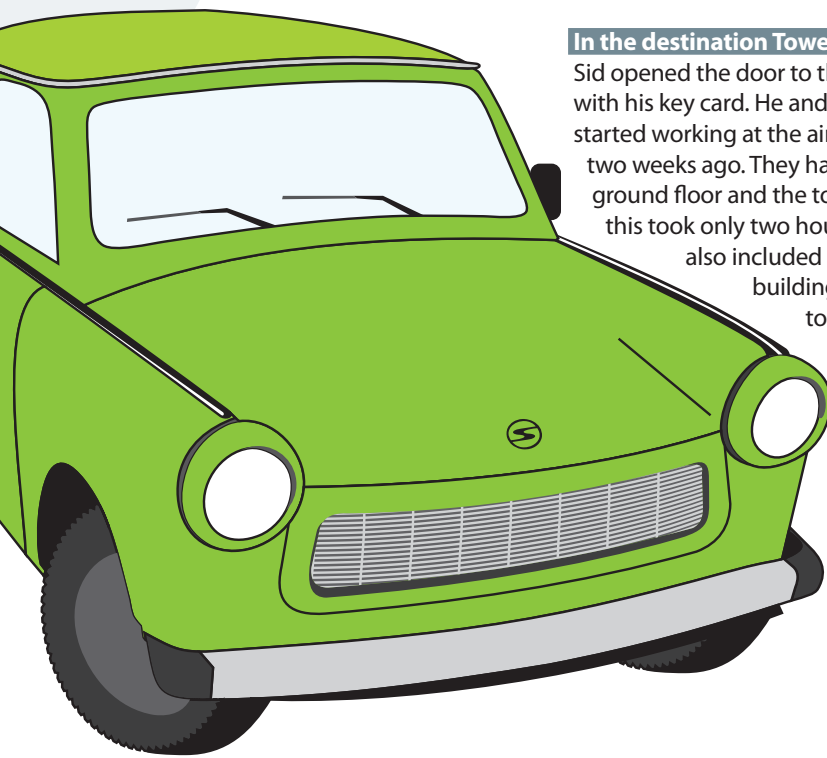
formerly worked at EUROCONTROL HQ as a Senior Expert involved in operational ATC safety activities. Bengt has a long background as Tower and Approach controller at Stockholm-Arlanda Airport, Sweden

## On the Flight Deck

They began descent towards the destination airport and went through the necessary pre-landing check lists. They were vectored for a standard ILS approach to Runway 22 – they needed to drop off one of the technical crew at the airport prior to starting the checks. The runway was relatively short but still more than enough for the type of aircraft they were flying. The Captain (non flying) was instructed to contact the Tower.

## In the destination Tower

"I don't like this stop bar control", Liza moaned. "It's unreliable, sometimes it's on when you believe it's off and vice versa". "I know" Paul replied. "I've talked to the management about it and they say they know about it for years, so why not do something about it then", he continued. "I agree" said Liza, sipping her coffee "and the PAPI both runways went out of service two hours ago, when is it going to be fixed". A vehicle called asking for permission to enter the runway for a runway inspection. ABCDE, called on Paul's frequency. "Hello Tower, ABCDE on your frequency passing four thousand feet, established on the Localiser long final Runway 22". "ABCDE continue approach Runway 22, report passing outer marker"; Paul had VFR traffic crossing final approach at 1500 feet – probably no conflict, he would deal with it later. He expected the VFR traffic to be clear of the zone by the time ABCDE passed the Outer Marker and anyway he expected the latter to reduce speed any second now.



**On the Flight Deck**

"Will we be on the ground soon?" asked one of the technical crew in a not very friendly way. "We are late for the checks so make it a quick one please". The Captain instructed the First Officer to delay the speed reduction; after all they were both very experienced. No problem at all.

**In the destination Tower building**

"Is it OK if I leave you down here and start with the cleaning of the tower cabin" Brent asked Sid. "No problem Brent, see you at the entrance door in ten minutes or so" Sid replied. Brent took the stairs up to the tower cabin, opened the door and entered. He was so impressed with all the equipment, not to mention the outside view; it must be fantastic to work as an air traffic controller. Best of all; he could see his Trabant down to the left, near the runway extension.

**In the destination Tower**

"Now it's happening again, the stop bar is staying on when I switch it off, can you please help me Paul, what am I doing wrong?" Liza's eyes began to darken, not a good sign for people in her vicinity. Paul came over and looked at the HMI in front of Liza. "ABCDE TCAS Climb".

**On the Flight Deck**

They were 1900 feet and descending when they suddenly received a TCAS Resolution Advisory to climb. The First Officer was surprised that this was possible at such a low altitude. He commenced the climb, the Captain reported the RA to ATC and almost immediately the RA changed to "Adjust Vertical Speed". Could it be another aircraft below, they didn't know but "Clear of Conflict" soon followed. "Sorry about that" the controller's voice on the frequency broke a moment of silence. They continued the approach, still confused over what had happened in what felt like a few seconds.

**In the destination Tower**

"Can you stay off the runway with the vehicle Liza, I have an inbound rocket". Paul was surprised at the speed of the ABCDE aircraft. "No problem Paul". Liza had calmed down as quickly as she had become upset and suddenly she started laughing.

"I just started thinking about that MITRE guy I fancied dating, he was really cute". Paul was not surprised with her sudden change of focus, that's the way she was, just accept and forget. Paul had returned to his own working position. He turned around and asked the cleaner politely but firmly to stop vacuuming the floor. It disturbed him; "clean the panels to the left of Liza instead, we can fix the rest later".

**On the Flight Deck**

They passed the Outer Marker for Runway 22. Now those in the back can't complain about being late thought the First Officer. He began slowly reducing the speed from 180 knots. They were on the Localiser but still slightly above the Glideslope.

**In the destination Tower**

"ABCDE, wind two one zero degrees eleven knots Runway 22 cleared to land". Paul watched the ABCDE aircraft on final getting close but it was still rather fast. "He must be very late, with that speed" Liza said to him turning away from the cleaner and looking out of the window. "Should I ask him to go around"? Paul's question was not immediately answered. "Wait and see, he must know what he is doing" Liza calmly replied. Following the request from Paul, Brent started cleaning the panel. Wow so many buttons: "VOR", wonder what that stands for; Volume on Radio? "GP" - Green Power? Brent's continued to imagine what all the buttons did while cleaning them all carefully. Unintentionally and without noticing, he pressed the "GP" button a little bit too hard. No warning sound occurred indicating the failure of the Glideslope signal - all acoustic alarms had been removed following strong complaints from the controllers. "Alarms which go on and off all the time are a distraction." they had said.

**On the Flight Deck**

Gear down, landing flap set. Then the glideslope indication disappeared - never mind, focus on the view out of the window instead - but no PAPI either.... The First Officer increased the rate of descent which led to an EGPWS Warning "Whoop Whoop, PULL UP, PULL UP". The synthetic voice disturbed him more than the Warning - he knew what he was doing. It sounded again.

I wish someone could stop that voice, why can't you turn down the volume he thought. Then the Warning activated for a third time making him, if that was possible, even more upset. He knew he was a bit high but he had recovered from such a situation successfully before without any problem. At his last session in the simulator he had shown the Instructor exactly how he did this, although he had been surprised when the Instructor had subsequently debriefed his working methods unsympathetically. "Make a go-around and circle to the other runway, we are too fast", the Captain instructed him. The Captain reported their intentions to the Tower Controller.

**In the destination Tower**

Both Paul and Liza had seen the jet on very short final a lot higher than usual. "ABCDE, making a go-around, can we circle to land on Runway 04?" "ABCDE turn right to join a left hand circuit for Runway 04, wind two two zero degrees one zero knots, Runway 04, cleared to land" Paul replied. He observed the aircraft climb and join the downwind for Runway 04.

**On the Flight Deck**

"Please turn inbound soon; we haven't all day you know" said the Captain. The First Officer turned onto final for Runway 04 - no PAPI again! Although initially a bit high, he recovered to cross threshold at almost the correct speed and height. Given the maximum tailwind, the adequate length in the other direction had now become hardly enough in the other. He landed the aircraft before the touchdown zone.

**In the destination Tower**

The smoke they saw coming from the brakes confirmed that the pilot was braking hard. Then, as it looked like there might not be enough runway left to stop on, they saw the aircraft deviating left at a relatively low speed, just missing the localiser aerial - this action was later praised by the airport operator's technical manager - before coming to an abrupt stop after hitting and destroying the only vehicle on the adjacent parking lot, a Trabant 601.

**On the Flight Deck**

At least we got you here on time, the Captain told the technical crew; he tried to stay positive as long as possible. 