

Hi everyone

Unfortunately I find it necessary to send out a special Mid-Month edition of the Newsletter. I was hoping to keep this until the normal Month-End, but one in particular has a relevant date before that is due to go out. Regrettably I have to put on my "grim reaper" hat and advise you of the recent losses of the following five Biggin Hill'ites...

On 16th December, Gerald (Geoff) Downs passed away. He flew from Biggin back in the days of Ray Blewett at Surrey & Kent Flying Club. Geoff played drums professionally with the King of Skiffle, Lonnie Donegan, & also with Monty Sunshine. He also ran a driving School. Geoff was apparently the instigator of many of the summer parties at Surrey's when he also brought along all his Jazz mates.

There will be a funeral service for Geoff at Midday on 19th January at All Saints Church, Nuxley Road (corner of Nuxley Road and Erith Road), Belvedere, Kent, DA17 5JE. This will be followed by a family only short service at the local crematorium. Friends are welcome to proceed after the main service to Barnehurst Golf Club, Mayplace Road East, Bexleyheath, DA7 6JU

On 17th December, Keith "Olly" Hollamby passed away following a short illness at the age of 65. He learnt to fly at Surrey & Kent in 1992 with instructor, Nick Davidson. Olly owned a company called Volkspares and Big Boys Toys, he also apparently had an Arrow based at Baldines hanger for many years.

On 3rd January, Doug Rees passed away. Doug was the owner of a Jodel 140 G-REES and various others. (At one stage in 1982, he was the owner of a DH Dove G-KOOL that he bought intending to use it for transporting fresh crabs to and from the Channel Islands, but this planned venture actually never got off the ground, and the aircraft was sold in Dec 84). Doug also ran a successful trucking business transporting fresh food to the continent for many years. Our very own JB worked for Doug at one point, driving all around Europe for his business.

Doug's funeral is to be held on 1st February at 2pm at the Tunbridge Wells Crematorium. His son, Owen, has said that he would welcome any old friends of Doug's from the airfield, both at the service, and immediately afterwards at a Wake to be held at the Shipping and Airlines Hangar at Biggin. He looks forward to meeting many of Doug's old friends from his flying circle..

On 4th January, a very old Biggin Hill'ite, Bill Barrup, for many years the airport's specialist welder, passed away at the ripe old age of 97. Coming from Croydon in the original move, Bill worked for A J Whitmores, and subsequently Fairflight, as well as self employed. Blind for many years, Bill nevertheless attended one of the airport reunions, escorted and assisted by Brian Prosper, a former engineer at Air Couriers and Express Aviation.

Today, 14th January, we have just been advised of the death of our old friend, Gordon Jones, this afternoon just as we were preparing to send this email. Gordon, who was a long term Biggin Hill'ite, was the subject of the "Airfield Personality" article in JB's "Biggin Hill Bugle" in the October 2008 edition (available online at www.bigginhillclub.co.uk). Gordon was an active flyer until relatively recently, owning several aircraft over the years, and was a respected and successful racing driver competing against many famous names of the day (Graham Hill, Ascari, and Salvadori, to name but a few). A regular visitor to the bar until his health deteriorated badly, Gordon will be missed by his many friends in aviation and motor racing circles.

Clearly as this only happened hours ago, we have no details of funeral arrangements. Rather than send out another mid-month email (assuming one doesn't become necessary for other reasons), I would ask that anyone who would like to be informed of the arrangements when

known, emails at john@bigginhillreunited.co.uk – I will send email details directly to anyone who has expressed interest in possibly attending Gordon's funeral.....

All five names have been entered on the "Roll of Honour" on the database website at www.bigginhillreunited.co.uk

Sorry to be yet again the bearer of bad tidings.....

John Willis
Biggin Hill Airport Users Database