



# BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT BUGLE

*News from our Airport at Biggin Hill - established 2005*



CLUB AND AIRPORT NEWS

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## ST GEORGES RAF CHAPEL



This is a unique chapel of remembrance and well worth a visit if you have never ventured inside – the doors are open from 11am – 4pm 7 days a week.

The Royal Air Force Biggin Hill closed in Biggin Hill in 1992, but St Georges Chapel is very much alive and used regularly for memorial services related to many airman associated with the services and indeed Biggin Hill during and after World War II. Special services are held on Battle of Britain Sunday and Remembrance Sunday. Everyone is welcome at all services. ‘Become a friend of St Georges Chapel’ for just £5.

The Chapel does not have a “Parish” in the normal sense and so it is felt that some people who, although unable to worship regularly in the Chapel, consider the Chapel special and would like to retain a close association with it, thus helping to ensure it remains a ‘Living Memorial’

Application for membership can be sent to: ‘Friends’ Treasurer, St Georges Chapel, Main Road, Biggin Hill, Westerham, Kent TN16 3EJ. Tel/Fax 01959 570353

The original St Georges Chapel unfortunately burnt down in 1946, was an old converted Army hut

at South Camp, Biggin Hill. Like the present Chapel, there was a room at the rear for reading and quiet contemplation, furnished with a couple of old leather armchairs, a table with books and magazines, plus a kettle for the essential cup of tea. The cause of the disastrous fire was never established. But as a form of retribution a couple of German prisoners of war would deliver coal and coke throughout the station whilst some Italian prisoners had a nice sideline making jewellery from fragments of Perspex and Spitfire brooches out of pennies until they were told it was an offence to deface the King’s coinage! Believing everything has a purpose, if ‘St Georges One’ had not burnt down, there would perhaps, not have been an incentive to build ‘St Georges Two’ and we would not have the fine Chapel we have today.

### FRIENDS APPLICATION FORM

Membership Fee: £5 per year for individual couple or family membership..  
I/We wish to become a member(s) of the FRIENDS OF ST GEORGES CHAPEL.  
Name(Mr/Mrs/Miss/Title with style of address in CAPITAL LETTERS PLEASE

Name.....  
Address.....  
.....  
.....Post Code.....  
Tel:No.....

I/We enclose remittance for  
Membership £.....  
Donation £.....  
TOTAL £.....

Cheques payable to:  
‘The Friends of St Georges Chapel’  
(See column one for address)

## 2009 BIGGIN HILL AIR FAIR

Another hot and sunny weekend of flying displays and the many other ground attractions that held the attention of the large crowds which turned out for the 47<sup>th</sup> International Air Fair – it is hard to imagine how these wonderful periods of time have become retentive memories. Let us not forget the large team of people that gather together annually to make each show a success. Air show Saturday saw quite a large crowd under a blue sky with a few fluffy clouds. The sun was hot and those of us, who are well tanned anyway, had changed colour to a dark roasted hue by the end of the day. The Vulcan bomber was a welcome sight after many years absence with the associated harsh crackle from its Olympus engines as it climbed almost vertical, with the associated vibration aerating my cold Holstein even further Thereby, adding



unforseen technology to the environment. The best performance of the day in the editor’s view should have been for the Mustang and Spitfire flown respectively by Paul Bonhomme and Nigel Lamb toward the end of the days flying display. Sunday dawned

with high overcast cloud, a little cooler with a huge crowd, necessitating the gates to be closed as the airfield became filled to capacity, which has seldom happened before – the highlight of the day being the flypast of a Virgin 747 leading the Red Arrows for a couple of passes before the large crowd. They formed up over the Channel before the run in to Biggin Hill Air Show. A fantastic



sight to behold. The Red Arrows then broke off for a landing before their usual multi colour display toward the end of the day against a



darkening background bringing the show to a wonderful spectacular conclusion.

### THE WIND FARM HAZARDS



There is some argument that these so called 'eco friendly' green generators using the natural wind streams over land and over the sea are designed to produce an alternative energy source. However there is some argument that they are a hazard to aircraft, whilst the manufacturers say they are highly visible, and therefore not a hazard..! Except, when they have been erected within 10km of an airfield, then beware..! These devices are usually set in a group called a wind farm – they can occupy a large area with 20 such generators (it is proposed to increase this number as high as 80) These are placed not less than 6D (diameter) apart which could roughly occupy an area as large as 1,400m x 1,400m which becomes a rather large blot on the landscape with blade height rising to 350 – 400ft agl and perhaps a mile wide!



This 6D spacing is more due to the loss of turbines through turbulence than loss of power on occasions when they are directly downwind. The blades in effect are wings – in severe turbulence they flex – and in a number of cases have hit the pylon! Hence 6D spacing! In conditions of low broken cloud these objects can be difficult to spot considering their size and light colouring with blades disappearing into the cloud. It has been said they are the cause of many birds being killed, but others argue that birds are smart and are able to avoid the blades quite easily, but what about the blade descending out of the cloud, aah..! Some turbines were shut down at night because of bats flying into them – how are bats able to navigate in the dark and hunt?

They have radar! So that means they haven't a problem with these monstrous machines bolted to the ground. The other economical claim is that the pylon only occupies a very small area of the land owner for a high profit yield, and therefore is acceptable, whilst the rest of this huge windmill occupies a lot of sky. How many of these weird things revolving near a motorway have caused people to lose concentration whilst being hypnotized by their apparent strange rhythm as they revolve with each blade appearing to flop, although they are revolving at a very steady speed. Has anyone considered the effects of turbulence created by turbines on aircraft taking off / landing at airfields downwind of them? Microlight pilots are acutely aware of the effect of the odd tree can have, never mind one turbine (or several) 350+ft tall..!! We suppose since aviation is one of the prime destroyers of the environment, so we are told, then, there is little chance of any sympathy here.

A high obstruction can create turbulence for a considerable distance. Measurements of wind breaks have shown reductions in wind speeds (where H is the height of the obstruction), at 10H range 66% reduction; 20H – 14%, 25H – 10% reduction. Effects were measurable up to 30H downwind (4%). With a wind turbine it is not just the height that is important – the actual obstruction size is the rotor diameter (D). Turbulence is usually regarded as significant 2D in front of the rotor, 2D above the rotor and 10D downwind. Never mind about the aviator and his infernal machine consider the poor little birds that feed on the wing flying downwind of these air disturbing monstrosities with the little insects being tossed about in the turbulence far worse than the birds – they will be starved to death trying to catch these insects on which they depend. Therefore it is obvious that these large turbines

create unseen problems. There are already 2,533 (and rising) turbines bolted to the ground in the UK, consider the effect of drag on the air stream that is required to turn one of these giants, it will gradually reduce this natural flow of so called free energy – aircraft need wind over their wings as do the birds, without this free airflow over our land, aircraft and birds wont be able to fly. One final consideration – flight planning can take on a more serious awareness for engine failure in a single engine machine in conditions of low broken cloud or even misty conditions experienced in our winter months. Whilst these obstructions are marked on some aeronautical charts, they may not be on all. The actual area they occupy is not defined clearly – only the height, so take care planning your flight. Should you accidentally descend into one of these wind farms, you will have a few seconds of the most exciting flying in your life and probably not see what hit you...!! Whereas, if you descend into a forest area which are defined clearly on a chart, the trees are stationary and you will probably survive the cushioning effect as you slow through the upper branches before sinking through the trees to the ground. Unless of course the landing is in a well developed pine forest, because the aircraft will stall at the top of the soft bushy forest and then fall 100ft to the ground, nose first, breaking your neck as you both hit the ground...!

I think I will go for the wind farm, with 6D spacing I can squeeze my wings between the pylons, and with luck, may not crash into one of those descending blades appearing out of the cloud into my last few seconds for a successful landing. Wow!! that would be something, wouldn't it, as you career past the base of a pylon only to find the next row is staggered – you have a major problem...!! Large aerals supported by some

invisible cables are marked as a spot height, so let us have wind farms marked accordingly with a dot for each pylon – that could be a great challenge for the cartographer. This may also help the lone pilot to avoid these farms in a crisis.

## AIRFIELD PERSONALITIES



Brian Austin, a quiet discreet individual arrived at Biggin Hill more by accident than design, in his own words. Unbeknown by many, he had quite an impact on the presentation of a professional flying club in conjunction with JDS (John Dow-Smith) manager of the flying club at that time. The aircraft painted in a uniform colour scheme thereby presenting a quality image to those who came to learn to fly. Brian's history at Biggin Hill started through a chance meeting at a petrol station in Croydon Road in 1978 with the driver of a van which had the name of a flying club painted on the sides. Quizzing the driver with regard to this flying club and where was Biggin Hill? The driver responded by saying he was on his way to Biggin, if he cared to follow him. This short journey lead to Brian's first flying lesson with JDS and from this first meeting became firm friends. Brian obtained his Pilots Licence in 1979. Brian's career role at this time was that of a Director within a group of companies, one of which he would buy out, 'Crispexfoods' which produced coating batters for fish and other frozen quality food products. Having his PPL Brian

was able to improve his business activities by flying to places as far as Blackpool, Cardiff etc; which could now be done in a day, whereas before it would take two or three days of his valuable time.

4 Years later Brian sold 'Crispexfood' (1984) and joined BHSF with JDS as Operations Manager. It was around 1990 that



the Grumman aircraft were arriving in the UK with Brian becoming more involved in aviation. He approached 5 investors to buy some Grumman aircraft and lease them back to Biggin Hill School of Flying. These aircraft were painted in a uniform colour scheme.



BHSF became Cabair at Biggin Hill with Brian remaining at the helm for many years. Brian, like many others from Biggin enjoyed the experience of the Malta Rally on a regular basis. Brian was a quiet spoken, always courteous, and approachable, a good listener.



After 30 years at Biggin Hill, Brian has joined the ranks of some of the longest serving aviators on the airfield. A farewell drink at the Old Jail was held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2009 Brian is seen here with Chris Bond, John Bryan and Brendan O'Brien. Several others attended this farewell party.