



BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT BUGLE

News from our Airport at Biggin Hill - established 2005



CLUB AND AIRPORT NEWS
ISSUE No. 123

BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT SOCIAL CLUB LTD
www.bigginhillclub.co.uk

In Ass. with BigginHillReunited.co.uk
1st May 2015

THE GREAT STORM OF 1987

By the Editor: John Bryan. MCD



The calm before this savage event, can only be described as another pleasant day for flying.

Today is the 15th October 1987.

The company Aztec aircraft is outside the hangar at Biggin Hill, pre-flighted ready to go.

My colleague David Isaac, Head Accountant for Brands Hatch Circuits, was to fly with me today, visiting Oulton Park, Cadwell Park and Snetterton Race Circuits.

Having experienced a pleasant day out with good weather, we finally set course from Snetterton back to Biggin Hill, late afternoon.

Passing Southend and leaving their CZ we transferred to Biggin ATC and soon became aware that the weather ahead suddenly appeared rather grim, (i.e. drizzle, mist).

I asked what the weather was like at Biggin, the controller advised that he could barely see the runway and asked my intentions, I advised as I was virtually on finals by now we would continue overhead and divert to Southend which was OK.

We saw nothing of Biggin Hill and set course for Southend, where we would wait out this glitch in the weather as we had 4 hours before Biggin Hill closed.

We settled down for a coffee and cake, the weather became worse, no wind, heavy drizzle and mist, which only got worse...!

We waited until a return to Biggin was out of the question and retired to a Hotel near the airport.

The drizzly condition got worse along with the mist, BUT NO WIND..!

16th October 0030 hours, I was watching TV and became aware of a howling noise.

Looking out the window it appeared to be very windy outside and a small tree is leaning about 45deg.

I phoned the airport tower to enquire about our aircrafts safety.

He asked where I had left it.

I told him it was last in the line up on Runway 33.

He said it looked OK and was on its own, having weather-cocked into wind. He asked if I could call back as the wind was blowing at 65kts.

After another 30mins the wind outside was now beginning to have a huuhroar sound.

Looking outside, the small tree is now flat on the ground along with the adjoining fence.

I called the airport again, whereupon the controller told me it

awful, terrible, really bad...!

I asked if I should come to the airport. He said I think you should Sir..!

I went down stairs to reception and asked for a taxi and left a note for my colleague to inform him I had gone to the airport.

Emerging from the hotel I was amazed at the strength of the wind and the amount of fallen trees.

Entering the terminal building at the airport the ceiling tiles had been blown out and were flying through the building like giant butterfly wings as all the doors were being blown open and slammed shut by the wind. They would then crash to the floor.

I left the relative calm within the terminal to check on our aircraft, as the controller had told me before, seemed to be OK.

I had earlier parked it as the last of a long line of aircraft with no thought as to any imminent hazard prior to our return to Biggin.

The wind outside was in fact a steady 65kts, our aircraft had weather-cocked into wind and rolled backwards about 20 yards from the other aircraft.

I had applied the parking brake, but not desperately hard-on, this allowed the wheels to rotate slowly.

With some helpers we chocked the aircraft and decided it was safest to

leave it where it was.

Outside were some C150 club aircraft, with 6 x 5 gallon drums of water attached to each wing.

The combined weight of these drums was 600lb.

Every now and then a gust of wind of probably 70kts or more would lift these aircraft about 6-8ft in the air and then drop them with a resounding crunch, such was the power of the wind.

By this time 6 aircraft had been blown over and the wind seemed to be increasing as walking outside required leaning on the wind to an angle of about 45deg. It certainly seemed like it. *(The wind, unknown to me was now a steady 84kts)*

I decided to head back to the security of the Control Tower for the moment.

A man burst in panic stricken, seeking help because his car was underneath an aircraft in the hangar. He had forgotten to mention that the hangar roof had been blown off also. Suffice to say, he didn't manage to recruit any volunteers to help him.

To be outside was dangerous enough, and it was essential to walk close to the buildings to avoid being struck by corrugated sheets of tin, blown off buildings on the airport.

Several of these sheets made it to the electrified railway nearby, with some spectacular arcing from the overhead cables.

About this time that I bumped into Steve Hayman (formerly Dubai ATC & Pilot) we started to arrange aircraft to be turned into wind.

The only aircraft that nobody was familiar with was an HS 748, so it was left as it was, out of wind.

Around 0430hrs, (16th October) the wind reached 104kts, the noise was horrendous, a terrific roaring sound. I was standing outside the Control Tower where a chain link

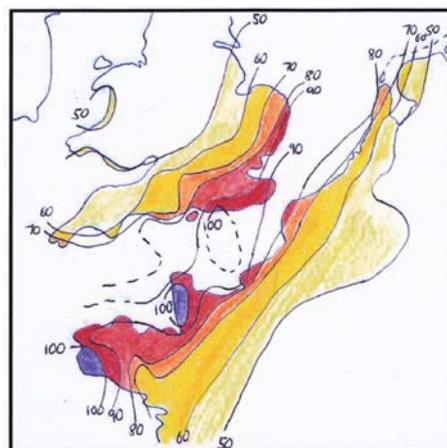
fence was protecting me from bits of wood and other flailing debris.

There was also a Boeing 737 parked across the front of the tower, out of wind with steel chocks and sand bags.

Suddenly this aircraft turned 90deg into wind, ending up about 8ft in front of my nose.

People were suddenly running around saying, don't get under it, leave it where it is.

During this night we had been watching the weather synoptic charts with its depressions which formed into one big storm.



This chart shows the effected area of the storms path up the English Channel.

During the night I had been watching the weather which primarily consisted of 4 main depressions, spread over an area from Holland, England, France and one in Italy.

The French Meteorology Services forecast this storm, and the UK Met Office ignored the warnings.

At 0530hrs the Control Towers Electrical Circuit Board caught fire. The Airport Fire Brigade were on hand quickly and put their hose through the window to douse the flames.

With that display of fire fighting, I decided to go and find someone still connected to electricity, and hopefully a cup of coffee.

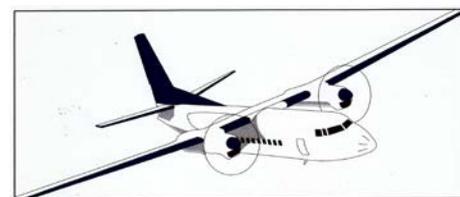
Shortly after my coffee break I bumped into one of my previous

hosts, saying their roof had just blown off, so they were literally homeless.

At 0700hrs my colleague David arrived at the airport.

He had slept through the storm and knew nothing about the devastation outside, until he came down to breakfast.

The wind was still blowing at 55kts and I said to him "shall we go". *"What, and be the first back"*, he retorted. By now there was no electricity at the airport, so we sat and waited.



About 0800hrs the crew of the HS 748 strode into the passenger terminal in their neat uniforms, ignoring the ceiling tiles littering the floor, proceeding to the exit door for the apron and boarded their aircraft.

The fact it was facing the opposite way to all the other aircraft outside obviously didn't matter.

They started the engines, taxied to the runway and took-ORF!

Next to leave was a little man who climbed into the Boeing 737, started the engines, straightened the nose wheel and left for Gatwick VFR low level.

I said to my colleague we can go now, we wont be the first back anymore, to which he agreed.



The wind was blowing at a steady 55kts as we taxied out and took-off for Biggin Hill.

On our track from Southend to Biggin we observed no obvious damage.

However, turning finals for runway 29 at Biggin, it was only then that we became aware of brown circles on the ground, where the trees once stood

After landing we proceeded to the hangar and David rushed off in his car because he had a 300 year old Barn that he was concerned about

He was back in less than five minutes saying the road is full of trees.

We re-fuelled our aircraft and went to see the real damage from the air. We were more aware which trees were standing and those that were not. Because everything was so green, it took a little while to see which trees were standing and those that were lying in a common line of the storm track.

We flew down to Bognor Regis to where the storm made landfall and followed the storm track to Shoreham which had 22 aircraft damaged, continued to Ash Down Forest, Challock (Glider site) on to Sittingbourne,

Quite a few school buildings were with their flat roofs 400/500 yds distance from the school site.

THE MORNING AFTERMATH



Wind speed still 55kts as these four gallant hero's, survey the damage of someone else's demise. L to R

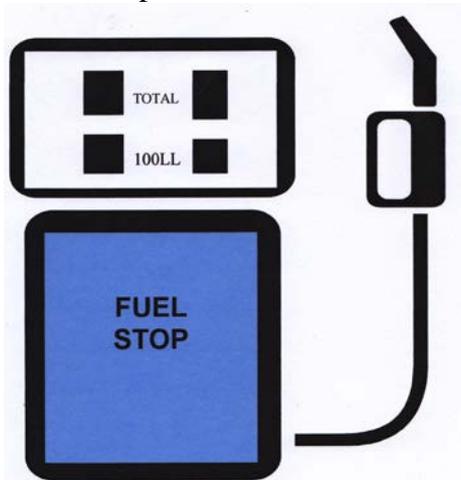
Mark Palmer, Richard Chippendale Gary Duncan (a/c owner), with Mich Parsons.



Air Touring Managing Director Richard Vipond arrives saying, "Oh my gawd..! Oh..! my gawd." It had taken him all morning to cut his way through trees blocking his drive.



I'll fill it up when I feel better...!!



Good formation to the bitter end...! These aircraft were secured to the concrete by their wing points, which were no match for the strength of the hurricane.



This TB20, G-BNXX was flown from Aerospatiale, Tarbes by JB on the 14th October, survived any damage as he had parked it close to the Club House.

17th October, John Symes, (Race Director) and JB fly to Snetterton Motor Race Circuit, in Norfolk.



Caravans used by Race Marshalls as their mobile home during race weekends.



One lone Marshall had arrived early for the weekend and during the storm, suddenly found himself on the grass, homeless, in the middle of Snetterton Circuit.

Such was the storms fury...!!

Emergency services were caught out somewhat, chain saws were in high demand and stocks were rapidly depleted.

Electricity cable supplies were in huge demand, causing delays. Some people had no electricity or telephone for the next 9 days.

STEPHEN HAYMAN



Ex ATC at Dubai UAE 1980 arrives at Southend before the Great Storm of 1987

15th/16th OCTOBER 1987
My logbook reads Be90 GBNAT
P1 EGMC / EINN / EICK / EGMC.

It was along time ago, these are my memories. Just one hour 35 mins from Cork good tail wind but nothing to write about in the forecast. I landed in Southend it was a breezy night. It must have been about 10pm and I was completing my post flight paperwork when all hell let loose. Pilots were coming to me asking if they could use the short runway due to the wind exceeding their crosswind limit. By the time we had calculated the performance it became very obvious that no one was going anywhere.

On the apron there was a B737 parked, not into wind but was chocked. The result was an automatic 90 degree nose wheel rotation into wind. Boeing had designed the aircraft so that this could happen to prevent damage to the aircraft. I remember seeing the remnants of the steel chocks, just like confetti !!

This was the second time I had witnessed this similar event, the previous time being in RAK in the Emirates about 6 years before.

As Flight Safety Officer / TRI, I immediately ordered all crew to

move their aircraft into wind as otherwise we too could end up with damaged aircraft. One came rushing back saying the Tower had refused. I replied just do it !!!

Fortunately they did. Not long after I remember seeing an Auster airborne floating surreally across the airfield, with no one in it of course.

Next the Tower called us to enquire if we had a DHC 6 qualified pilot as there was a Twin Otter also loose !!

Engineer Mike Skillings and I offered our services. I had flown the aircraft many years before so between us we thought we could manage. We ran across the apron to assist the firemen, jumped into the cockpit to find the brakes not working. What you don't know was the aircraft was heading for a collision with the resident Viscount. Between us we got the engines started, brakes still not working..!! The only way of controlling the aircraft was with the use of power. A quick call to the tower to get them to ask the owners why the brakes wouldn't work came to nothing, so decided the only option for us was to manoeuvre the aircraft into the lee of the hangar and get the firemen to sandbag it so hopefully it wouldn't move. This we did, but in the process nearly hit the hangar as soon as we got in the lee of the wind we were then doing about 60 Kts..! Fortunately reverse thrust works.

By about 2 am it calmed down and I took the decision to go home. It had been a long exciting day. I managed to get a mile down the road only to find a tree blocking the road. I had a long drive back to Kent and this was obviously not the only tree in Essex.

So it was back to the Airport Hotel to get some well deserved sleep. Next day the daylight gave us the

real story of what had happened. the devastation was there to be seen. Most of our trees in Kent horizontal ! It seems quite odd recollecting this event. We had saved several aircraft from disaster that night and guess what thanks we got afterwards, nothing !

GARY DUNCAN NIGHTMARE



Gary is an aircraft owner living at Warlingham, Surrey. (in 1987)

He recalls his near death experience traversing the route along the treelined Farleigh Common.

Oh..!! the night of the storm. On that night I had agreed to visit an old friend of mine at Forest Row who had just started a job as a first officer with BAF, it was not a late night because he had an early start next day so I left his flat about 10.30. At that time I drove everywhere in my Caterham 7, a car with no roof so I was always very aware of the weather. I had noticed that it had turned a bit warmer and was now starting to drizzle and the wind was getting up a bit. I thought nothing of it and blasted off home to Warlingham, watching out for any police cars as they did not seem to share the same passion as me for drink and speed. I got home about 11.00pm, had a cup of assam tea, then put the car to bed. That's strange it's getting very windy, I hope Surrey and Kent has tied down AJ OK. It's about midnight now, my father

came downstairs 'have you heard that wind?' It was now starting to make a howling noise just getting louder and louder, 'was the roof going to stay on?' I said. I must go to Biggin Hill to check AJ is tied down. After a few choice words and an argument with my father, who seemed to be over concerned about a few roof tiles, I tried to point out that my aircraft needed far more attention and I left, he was not best pleased.



I decided to go...! Yes, in a car with no roof, must have been about 1.00am. (16th October) by now. It was scary out there, no one around on the road just me. I got as far as Farleigh Common thinking maybe I should turn around... no I will carry on. From this point on, the road went into the woods.



I had a job driving, avoiding bits of fallen branches and most of the countryside seemed to be flying through the air, the headlights now picking up all sorts of flying debris 'Oh my god I am going to die!' I was now at a stand-still could go no further. I could hear the splintering and crashing of trees all around me, to say I was slightly concerned was an understatement and just at that point within a few feet in front of me there was an almighty *ear splitting crash* as a huge tree the size of a bus fell a few feet in front of me. 'Oh my god, I am going to die!' I selected

reverse but in my panic I stalled the engine, I was now physically shaking desperately turning the ignition key willing the Lotus twin cam to fire up it just spluttered into life. I had to reverse down the road avoiding all the debris and just missing a ditch. I eventually got to the safety of the common, pointed the car in the direction of home, more choice words from my father.



Little or no sleep that night. Like most people, tried to get to work but just too many trees down, I eventually got to work about 11.00. am. My career in the aircraft hire business more than likely is finished. AJ must be totally destroyed!

Could not see AJ on the ramp outside Surrey & Kent., Oh no it's blown away!

Probably as far as Sevenoaks High Street! By this time Richard and Mark found me and said we know where AJ is, get in the firms van and we will take you to see her. 'Oh, no! What's happened to AJ?' We drove across to Air Touring, they said right, close your eyes and come with us. I said "no don't torture me anymore"...!! I slowly opened my eyes and saw 3 aircraft on their backs, totally destroyed, bent and twisted.



Mark, Richard, Myself and Mitch.

Oh my god! I thought where is AJ? To my surprise and relief she was the right way up about 50 foot



behind those damaged aircraft, parked on the grass, not tied down. With 3 long skid marks on the grass where it had obviously been blown backwards...!

I couldn't believe it. The reason why AJ was there was because the VOR was not working, nothing new there, then...!!

The guys in the avionic workshops were going to check it out the next Day. (Today 16th)

If there is a God, then thanks for looking after me...twice, in 24 hours!

ANOTHER TRUE STORY:

Al Capone was a gangster from Chicago. His lawyer '*Easy Eddie*' had exceptional skills at legal maneuvering kept Big Al out of jail for a long time. To show his appreciation, Capone paid him very well and gave him a mansion with "all conveniences". Eddie gave little consideration to the atrocity that went on around him, but he did have one soft spot - a son whom he loved dearly. Eddie saw to it that his young son had nice clothes, cars and a good education. Price was no object.

Eddie even tried to teach his son right from wrong. Eddie wanted his son to be a better man than he was.

"One day, Easy Eddie decided to rectify wrongs he had done. He decided he would testify against the mob and Capone, clean up his tarnished name and offer his son some semblance of integrity.

"So he testified in 1932", and Capone was sentenced to 11 years in prison. In 1939, Easy Eddie was gunned down in the street the next day.

Most people credited Capone's people for the hit.

Police removed from Eddie's pockets a gun, a rosary, a crucifix, a religious medallion and a poem clipped from a magazine.

The poem read: *"The clock of life is wound but once and no man has the power to tell just when the hands will stop, at late or early hour; now is the only time you own, live, love, toil with a will; place no faith in time for the clock may soon be still."*

The second story

World War II produced many heroes. One such man was Lt. Butch O'Hare, a fighter pilot assigned to the aircraft carrier Lexington in the South Pacific.

On Feb. 20, 1942, his entire squadron was sent on a mission but O'Hare soon realized his fuel tank was too low. He headed back to the fleet and noticed that a squadron of Japanese aircraft was speeding its way toward the Lexington.

Laying aside all thoughts of personal safety, he engaged the formation of Japanese planes. He fired at the planes until all his ammunition was spent, then dove at the planes, trying to clip a wing or tail. Finally, the Japanese squadron took off in another direction.

Butch O'Hare and his tattered fighter limped back to the carrier. He had destroyed five enemy aircraft and for that, became the Navy's first ace of World War II and the first naval aviator to win the Medal of Honor.

A year later, Butch was killed in aerial combat at the age of 29. His memory is kept alive as Chicago's O'Hare Airport is named after him.

The kicker is: The Story asks, what do these two stories have to

do with each other..? Butch O'Hare was Easy Eddie's son.

AL CAPONE THE BAD GUY



He financed Easy Eddie.

EASY EDDIE O'HARE



Eddie financed his son.

LT CMDR BUTCH O'HARE

Who became a WWII hero.



BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT



25th March 2015

Reference: Proposal for extended opening hours at Biggin Hill Airport from 0630 am to 2300 pm.

The meeting at the Bromley Council Civic Centre was conducted professionally by the Council Executive.

The outcome of this meeting was a success with the proposal for extended opening hours of the airport being agreed in principal, following a vote by the council.

BHAL provided coaches for the airport tenants, pilots, local citizens who have a dedicated interest in their airports future.

The spectators gallery within the council chambers was packed to capacity, with people sitting on the stairs – there was also an overflow room for spectators, which had repeater TV Screens and Sound.

Like most applications for any changes to planning etc; there is always an immediate rejection by someone with an irritant nature.

Having moved into an area near an airport the irritant considers this to be a real cool place to live.

Suddenly, he discovers that aeroplanes operate over the boundary fence.

This individual, will then object to a noise whether-or-not it is going to be a nuisance.

Up to this point in time our individual seems totally unaware of noise pollution, in its entirety.

Traffic noise ...!!

Anyone who has experienced living in a deep country environment, will be aware of birds chirping happily in the early morning with their pleasant whistles etc; This will gradually be drowned out by the transition to vehicle road noise which will last continuously all day, until the last aircraft has long since landed.

Any lobbyist who claims aircraft taking off disrupt their child's sleep pattern, are more than likely to suffer from their own inadequate sleep pattern.

My experience with children is that they will always wake up when it is inconvenient **to you, more so..!**

Their waking has nothing to do with the noise of an aircraft, or any other vehicle noise in the vicinity. Put a child in a car, they go to sleep almost immediately.

They get hungry or whatever and demand attention, day or night..!

The irritants modern constructed, double-glazed apartment is quiet inside, any aircraft noise created outside is probably 99% inaudible, without rattling one window.

If you happen to live near a motorway (M25) e.g. there is an intrusive amount of tyre noise created which becomes obvious when you are out of your vehicle, far worse than any light aircraft that happens to pass overhead. (**the aircraft noise will dissipate in less than a minute**).

Whilst the infernal tyre noise continues.

Who remembers the early BAC 111 twin jet airliner and the exhaust noise it made.

The editor lived in Tooting during this period and claims this aircraft could be heard leaving Heathrow at

2100 hrs each night, climbing to altitude for 20 minutes or longer, clearly as it made its way across France to a destination somewhere in sunny Spain.

These aircraft were eventually fitted with a 'hush kit' but they were still a bit noisy.

The modern executive jet aircraft have by-pass turbine power units which are surprisingly much quieter.

Their noise during take-off is less than a minute as they climb to 2,000ft, or more at which point they are almost inaudible.

You have to want to be aware out of pure interest to continue to hear these aircraft further.

There is no throbbing reverberation of the power, produced by that of a military aircraft producing an incredible ear-splitting noise and the associated ground vibrations that numb your senses as it climbs skywards with shock-waves visible from the after-burners.

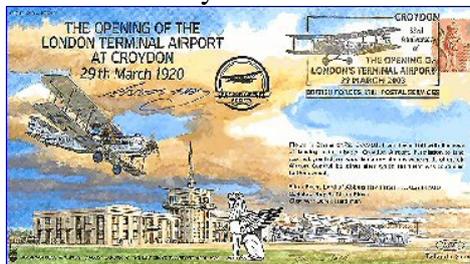
Even your irritant objector to aircraft noise will experience an orgasm...! At this point in time..!!



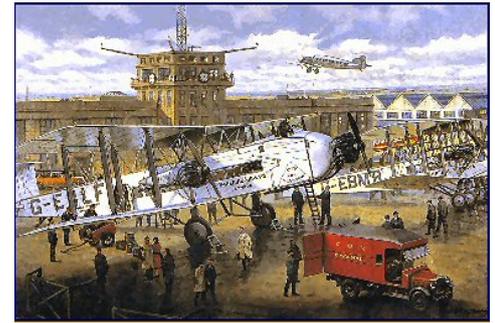
Don't you just "luv this efflux" ?

CROYDON AIRPORT 1920

These were days of wonderment of



the many new large bi-planes of the day which were able to fly to the continent and other far away places, taking days to get to Africa



LUXURIOUS FLYING DAYS



Pop over to Le Touquet for lunch minimal luggage, you could speak to the pilot, he was your guide.

The interiors were fitted with light weight wicker chairs for comfort ?



Today's modern Jet Airliner can get to Australia in less than 24 hours with comfortable re-clining chairs big screen entertainment, etc;

CROYDON CLOSED IN 1959