

Hi everyone

Welcome to the April Database Newsletter - a little longer than normal.....

Sorry it's a little early, but as I will be away at the month end, I thought I would send it now rather than attempting to send it from the Carribean.

The April edition of the Biggin Hill Airport "BUGLE" by John Bryan is available for viewing/downloading on the Social Club's website at

<http://www.bigginhillclub.co.uk>

Please remember to send JB any stories of interest, and photos, for inclusion in future issues. It's your newsletter so please help JB to keep it coming.... (his direct email address is johnbryan@jbplstd.demon.co.uk, or you can send items directly to me to pass on)

South Camp development

Whilst many will be aware that, for reasons best known to themselves, Bromley Council is still resisting all attempts for a hotel to be built at the South Camp entrance, the actual development work on the airfield for the new hangars has now commenced. For those that cannot picture the changes, that means the works to prepare the area in front of the old Pilots Pals Bar have now started, with new parking ramp areas adjacent to the main road already in use. So the development that originally threatened the old bar last year, has finally begun.

I'm sure we all look forward to seeing a much smarter south camp once this is all completed.

Whilst talking of the old bar.....

Joe & Val Merchant

Joe now tells me that they are very settled into their new Spanish home, and he has been working very hard decorating the exterior of his villa, which is almost completed. He is also thinking about starting a new business!!! What is this Joe, I thought you were planning a life of lazy luxury in the sun? Maybe we will yet see a Pilots Pals in Spain? Only joking.....!

Joe is now back on email, after a longish break while he settled in. If any of his old mates from the Pilots Pals Club (or the airfield generally) would like to make contact, please email me at the database, and I will forward all emails directly to Joe for his response.

Congratulations

With Biggin Hill Airport getting busier and busier, the airport is working hard to keep staffing levels up to cope with the needs of the vastly increased Jet traffic on a daily basis.

Congratulations for the promotion of Bill Robinson to the post of SATCO (Senior Air Traffic Control Officer) - this is a well deserved promotion, and I am sure welcomed by many who have known Bill for some years. Outgoing SATCO, Peter Mirams, has been promoted to the newly created position of Manager Air Traffic Services, where he will be in charge of Policy and Planning (and future development) for the ever expanding airport into the new decade and on to the Olympics in 2012. Well done to both of them.

Continuing on the provision for the airport's development, I understand that the airport is investing heavily in staff on the air traffic and operational side, with three members of the team commencing upgrade courses this month. From being an airport that often looked as though it could lose the battle to survive as an airport, to one of the most rapidly expanding airports in the Southeast

-serving the capital city, the airport authority should be commended for their ongoing development that will undoubtedly see the airport's long term survival.

Let's hope, whilst they plan for these improvements, they continue to support the GA community that has supported them over the years when things were not so good.

Recent losses..

The airfield was represented earlier in March at the funerals of old friends previously publicised in the last Newsletter:

Bill Hodgson - close friend of the late Bill Webb and many of the old timers on the airport - Biggin Hill Airport was well represented at the funeral at Beckenham Crematorium on 3rd March by Steve and Debbie Danahar, Roger Dunn, and John Willis. Bill's extensive family and very large group of friends and colleagues packed the Chapel to bursting point for the very moving service.

Ronald (Dickie) Dixon. Dickie was apparently given a good send off at his funeral on 4th March in Sidcup by friends from RAFA and this was also attended by old Biggin Hill'ites Ray Massey and "Spud" Murphy, former Experimental Flying Group members.

Slightly different subject matter now:

Pilots Licence issues...

Although not really something this database would get involved in, as it potentially affects some members, I felt it would be acceptable, so apologies if anyone feels this is not the right place to make points like this.

Lots of pilots hold both UK and FAA pilots licences, and the latter is often in the form of a "restricted" FAA Airman Certificate, which is issued on the strength of their UK licences. A situation has recently come to light that could affect many of the FAA "Restricted" Licence holders.

The CAA has apparently started taking action against people flying in UK airspace illegally, as they see it. There is an anomaly in that the FAA licence 'appears' to give unrestricted cover for either Single engine Landplanes, or Multi Engine Landplanes, or both (as long as the aircraft concerned is not a jet (where a type rating would be required), whereas the UK licence would often require a type rating to be held for flying a particular type (even privately) - eg. any turboprop!. If a UK licence WOULD require a specific type rating to fly it on a UK licence, then a "restricted" FAA licence is NOT VALID as it is dependent upon the cover of the UK licence to validate it.

For example:

A UK licence always requires a type rating on the licence to fly any aircraft fitted with a turbine engine, and this means it EXCLUDES TURBOPROPS without a specific type rating as well!

A "standalone" FAA licence covers all except pure jets - ie. it INCLUDES TURBOPROPS.

Therefore, if the FAA licence is a "Restricted" one based on the UK licence - then that licence does NOT allow a turboprop to be flown unless the holder has a type rating for that aircraft on the British licence!

With the arrival of more turboprop and jet aircraft in the UK, many of which are on the US register, the CAA is known to be looking carefully at the people who fly them to make sure their licence is valid - so "Standalone" FAA licences are OK for Piston and Turboprop up to 12,500lbs, but this is NOT the case if the FAA licence is "Restricted" based upon a licence where a type rating would have been required for that licence!

A simple test is - if you have a "restricted" FAA licence - look at the aircraft about to be flown and

ask yourself - "if it had a UK registration, would I be licenced to fly it on my UK licence" - if the answer is YES - then it is OK, but if the answer is NO - then your FAA licence is NOT valid.

(TBM700 and TBM850 pilots beware, as rumours have been heard that someone at Biggin Hill may be being watched!)

And finally....

Biggin Hill Airport Social Club

Thanks to everyone who has joined the club for 2008, in spite of the fact that no premises actually exist at the airport since the closure of the Pilots Pals Club Bar. Membership applications have almost exclusively been from people involved on the airport, either currently or historically, so most are Full Airport Members who will benefit from free entry to the Air Show in June (7th and 8th), as well as the current concessions at local (and not so local) restaurants and businesses.

A common theme seems to have run through the renewals - many saying that they are maintaining the membership as a means of saying thanks for (and financially supporting) the regular newsletters and the attempts to keep the airport community together, and both JB and I thank you for those kind comments.

A reminder to any old members who have not joined - the membership is open to any current or historic Biggin Hill Airport users and workers, who will be eligible for all concessions, including air show entry. It is also open to former members of Pilots Pals Club who were not either airport workers or users but had supported that club - however, in these cases, the membership will entitle them to all concessions EXCEPT air show entry. Clearly the air show entry is a concession that is very special for airport people, and it is important that membership of the club is not used by local people as a means of getting into the air show cheaply. (Thanks to Colin Hitchins of Air Displays International for again agreeing to the commercial arrangement designed to assist our membership)

That's about it for this month

John Willis

Biggin Hill Airport Users Database