

Hi everyone

Welcome to the April 2020 Newsletter for the Biggin Hill Users Database. Welcome also to any new Database members who may be receiving this regular Newsletter for the first time.

You are reminded that, even if you ever fail to receive your Newsletter by email, you can always view it online, as well as back copies of this Newsletter and also all the original Biggin Hill "Bugles" written by our own John Bryan (JB), by visiting the club website at [www.bigginhillclub.co.uk](http://www.bigginhillclub.co.uk)

*(If you have not received your copy within 24 hours of the beginning of the month, please check the club website above where you can find and draw it down for yourself!)*

## **CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC**

Since the last newsletter at the end of February, the apparently Chinese originated Corona Virus (Covid-19) has arrived with a vengeance throughout the world.

Initially the UK Government policy was for everyone to practice minimum 2 metre "social distancing" and staying in our homes except for certain activities, like going to work if this couldn't be carried out from home, or taking daily exercise once a day etc... Unfortunately some rather foolish people seemed to think these "voluntary" rules didn't apply to them so, on 23<sup>rd</sup> on March, the Government were forced to make the restrictions mandatory and enforceable in law.

This change had a major effect on the aviation industry, with most airlines grounding much of their fleets, and many people's jobs being effectively stopped as a result of non-essential travel being restricted and people being confined to their homes.

These new, now mandatory, restrictions caused much of the general aviation industry to totally cease operations. At Biggin Hill the three flying clubs, EFG, Alouette, and MP Flying Club all closed their doors and completely ceased both flight training and all PPL self-fly hire. Maintenance companies, Falcon and Shipping and Airlines, closed their doors except for AOG assistance to avoid staff and clients breaching the 2 metre rule. The Heritage Hangar also ceased all ground and flight operations. Well done to all Biggin Hill based operators taking this very seriously and protecting us all from spreading the virus to others.

Private owner flying became a problem too as driving to the airport became classed as non-essential travel, which is no longer permitted. It was also considered unwise to fly in case an incident occurred (like a forced landing), which could make use of emergency services that are needed to cover the needs of coping with Corona Virus victims.

The CAA also confirmed on the day we were going to press that "General Aviation aircraft flying for recreational purposes is NOT permitted in accordance with current Government restrictions".

From medical standpoint, hospitals are cancelling all routine operations to ensure they have the capability and capacity to deal with the anticipated influx of virus victims. GP surgeries are, in the main, closed to personal visits, with most situations being now dealt with remotely via phone services.

Most vacations have had to be cancelled, and new, temporary, hospitals are being opened in exhibition centres to give the NHS more capacity and the ability to cope.....

All in all, an incredibly difficult time for everyone. Please stay well, and stay safe.....

## **MARCH WEATHER**

The earlier part of March was extremely changeable, with strong crosswinds at times, and periods of low clouds and poor visibility. But of course, all this changed as soon as the Corona Virus "lockdown"

was announced at the beginning of the final week, when we had CAVOK weather every day but couldn't fly now due to the Corona Virus restrictions in force!

### **APRIL BIGGIN HILL POSTED FUEL PRICES**

Unfortunately, at the time of going to press, the "posted" Biggin Hill Airport fuel prices were not available. If the information becomes available after publication I will post the rates on the Biggin Hill Reunited Facebook page.

### **PETER PRESCOTT**

During this month we received the news that old Biggin Hill'ite, and friend to many of us, Peter Prescott, had sadly passed away. Unfortunately we have no details of when this actually occurred

Peter will be remembered by most of the old Biggin Hill'ites as the owner of Biggin Hill based maintenance company, Avtech. Unfortunately Avtech closed down a few years ago, but Peter continued to stay in touch with many at the airport.

Sadly Missed by his many friends – R.I.P. Peter

### **BRIAN LAUREY**

We have been advised that another old Biggin Hill'ite, Brian Laurey, sadly passed away recently.

Brian was the one time owner of a Jodel DR1050, which he kept at Biggin Hill in the 1980's. He lived in Shortlands, but worked on the oil rigs in the Middle East. He was well known to Cobby and JB in those early flying days. Brian eventually lost his flying medical, and took up gliding instead.

He will be missed by many of the early Biggin Hill airport users. - R.I.P. Brian...

### **NEWS FROM AROUND THE CLUBS, BUSINESSES & OTHER AIRPORT USERS**

If you would like me to include your business or personal comments in the Newsletter, either on a regular basis, or just occasionally, please drop me an email with your contact details and the requested contribution and I will try to include it in the next Newsletter. I will acknowledge anything sent to me for inclusion. (Please email: John Willis at [john@bigginhillreunited.co.uk](mailto:john@bigginhillreunited.co.uk) )

### **ALOUETTE FLYING CLUB**

Strange days at Alouette and everywhere else.

After a terrible winter, when flights were getting up, the virus locks us all down again. So what happens at Biggin? Then the sun comes out ... so typical.

Thankfully all at Alouette are safe and, at time of writing, feeling well.

We have no choice but to wait this out but let's not waste time. There are still written tests to pass. If you are near a bi-annual, or concerned your written tests passed may time out, do not worry! The CAA are trying to help with the timing of these, so speak to your instructor.

Everything is in place - Aircraft; instructors; improving weather. So as soon as we get the all clear from the virus associated restrictions, we can get very busy again.

In the meantime - Stay safe.

Regards  
Bruno Bruniges - Club Chairman

## **MONTHLY NEWS FROM THE CEO'S OFFICE**

Well, when I wrote my latest update towards the end of February, I never envisaged the world would look like it does now. COVID-19 has changed the world, our country and our industry and the word 'unprecedented' cannot be over stated. But what does this mean for the Airport?

London Biggin Hill airport remains open as part of the national transport infrastructure in line with government guidelines. Operationally, the number of flights has dropped significantly, and we are supporting repatriation efforts and essential movement of key personnel. The airport is reviewing all operations daily and we will continue to scrutinise our procedures to ensure government recommendations are implemented.

The Management Team hold daily COVID-19 meetings to review government policy and adapt policies, procedures and practices accordingly. Our focus is to protect the business, protect jobs, protect each other and protect you.

Aviation is one of the most regulated industries in the world, which includes dealing with the current pandemic, and we are following all protocols as advised by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the UK government. This includes, all non-essential staff working from home, the closure of the Lookout Café, a deep clean and fumigation of all public and administrative facilities, extra cleaning measures throughout the day, and all incoming flights are subject to stringent CAA measures.

The airport is a workplace to over 1,500 local people, supporting local families and in turn local businesses. Our primary goal is to ensure that the safety and employment of our staff, tenant companies, suppliers and contractors is maintained as much as is reasonably practical.

I would like to end by wishing all the very best in these trying times and hope that you remain safe and well.

Cheers  
David Winstanley

## **ROLL OF HONOUR**

Thank you to members that continue to provide us with additional names of old Biggin Hill'ites who we had missed. The Roll of Honour can be seen on the website at [www.bigginhillreunited.co.uk](http://www.bigginhillreunited.co.uk)

(Anyone who flew from, or worked, or even socialised regularly at the airport since it became a civilian base in 1959/60 and who has passed away, should ideally be included on there. If you know of someone whose name belongs on the Roll, please email me with their names, and details at [john@bigginhillreunited.co.uk](mailto:john@bigginhillreunited.co.uk) )

## **DATABASE EMAIL ADDRESSES**

A constantly updated list of database members can be seen at <http://www.bigginhillreunited.co.uk> Please remember to let me know if your email address is changed. If you know others who are not on the list but are eligible to join (i.e. if they currently fly from the airport, or work there, or ever have done so) please let me know or tell them about us – Database membership is, of course, free.

That's it for this month – except for me to say I hope everyone stays safe and healthy though this Pandemic.....

John Willis  
Biggin Hill Airport Users Database

**And Finally:**

**The usual “and finally” section has been dropped this month in deference to the serious issues that we are all suffering from in respect of the world wide Corona Virus Pandemic.**

**Jokes simply are inappropriate while this terrible crisis is ongoing, which I am sure you will all agree...**

**I would like to add our thanks to all the emergency services for their amazing efforts – The NHS are completely snowed under, but working wonders – the Police and Ambulance services are doing us all proud...**

**Well done to them all – your efforts are very much appreciated by us all....**