

Hi everyone

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

You are reminded that for Database subscribing members, even if your Newsletter doesn't arrive by email at the beginning of the month, you can always view it online, as well as any back copies of this Newsletter by visiting the club website at 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!)

JANUARY WEATHER

Well I guess we all expect the Winter to be a bit difficult for us all weather wise, so we can't be too surprised at the quite appalling conditions we've had this month! The January weather was consistently pretty rubbish for light aircraft flying!

We've had a good assortment of poor conditions during this period – Rain or Drizzle, some periods with low cloud or strong gusty wind conditions, but for several weeks we have also had quite extreme low temperatures (not unusual for winter of course) with pretty heavy hoar frost, which required expensive and time-consuming pre-flight de-icing!

With another Winter month through February, it is likely to be fairly unfavourable. Still eventually we may get to the Spring and better flying weather...

BOB DENWOOD

Last month we notified you of the sad loss of old Biggin Hill'ite and ex-military veteran, Bob Denwood.

Bob's very well attended Memorial Service was held on Monday 30th January 2023 at the RAF St George's Chapel at Biggin Hill, and was followed by a Reception at the Nightingale Café in the attached Biggin Hill Memorial Museum.

It was so good to see so many old Biggin Hill'ites gathering to show our respects and support to Bob's family.

You really will be missed Bob – Rest in Peace

ALOUETTE FLYING CLUB

As you will see when you read the section below provided by Stuart Taylor, the Chairman of the club, Alouette (which was actually started in 1959 by Don Perch!) will be ceasing operations at the end of February.

There have been lots of rumours and misinformation spreading on Social Media, so along with Stuart, I just wish to correct some of the incorrect information that has been circulated by many who do not know the facts...

The Club has NOT been thrown out of the Airport by the airport management!

The Club has NOT gone bust!

The Club has NOT run out of money!

The Airport Management have always been very helpful and done their best to help the club, and they should not be unnecessarily criticised as has been spread by some unconnected people!

The facts are that with the UK's very uncertain economic climate, membership has reduced quite dramatically (some flying members are being quite rightly told by their families to conserve their family finances to ensure that they can continue to feed their children and other dependents, and to ensure they can continue to heat their homes in these difficult times!)

From the Club's point of view, they felt it unethical to continue to take up front payments for such things as Trial Lessons and five-hour packs, when we felt the club should cease operations.

The decision to cease was made to ensure that we maintain the cash reserves to enable such previous purchases to either be flown before the close date, or the unused payments returned to the purchasers.

Obviously the Club is sad to find it necessary to cease operations after all these years, but feel that they are doing the right thing to protect it's members and others involved in the operation. I personally believe they are doing the right thing in these difficult times and should be supported for acting in such a professional manner.

Obviously though, the club would welcome anyone involved with the airport, and all present and past members to the final social gathering at the club bar on 18th February from 15:00 – I and they would love to see everyone to join us to say goodbye to virtually the oldest ever club at Biggin Hill Airport.

AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS

The various Airport developments/improvements are still progressing very well.....

The "Landings Hotel" is now expected to be completed in around mid-February, and it is expected to have a couple of "soft" openings in late February and early March, and then the formal public opening will follow shortly after.

Taxiway "Bravo" joining the "Foxtrot" taxiway to the current "Alpha" and "Charlie" taxiway is now well underway. This new taxiway will then enable the airport's much larger corporate jets to taxi safely to Runway 21, without having to use the current, much narrower, "Alpha" taxiway. But the "Alpha" taxiway itself has now also been resurfaced.

The airport is much improved now with all the building smartening up and the perimeter road resurfacing right from the entrance through to the Heritage Hangar on the far side has made it all so much better. (The airport has asked us all to adhere to the roadway speed limits so that adding speed bumps can be avoided.)

With Biggin Hill Airport now looking very much like a mini-Heathrow, which is something that we all should be proud of. The restructuring has ensured that the wonderful ex-Battle of Britain airfield is likely to always remain operational for the specialised Executive Jet movements that serve our capital city.

In spite of these improvements and changes, General Aviation aircraft are still likely to retain a home here, but I know all GA Light Aircraft operators are very concerned about the high charging structure that applies to their operations, and which make their ongoing flying more difficult to maintain the flow of revenue generating flying. All we can all do is to continue to show the airport how seriously we all take the special routings, and Noise Abatement procedures etc. (In reality, the airport does frequently congratulate all the GA Biggin based operators on the way they work so well within the rules applied to us all. It is important that based operators continue to do this and make it obvious that the real infringers are visiting non-based GA traffic – not those that are based at the airport!)

FEBRUARY BIGGIN HILL POSTED FUEL PRICES

The “posted” Biggin Hill Airport fuel prices, excluding VAT, for the calendar month of February 2023 are:

£1:91.2 per litre for 100LL Avgas if supplied from the Fuel Bowser (if uplifted using fuel account card Only from the Self-Refuel pumps = minus 5p per litre)

£0:98.3 per litre for Jet A1 (or £1:55.5 per litre for “Sustainable Aviation Fuel”!)

SPECIAL NOTES: Users are advised that credit and debit cards can no longer be used at the self-refuel pumps. If you use self-refuelling, you will need your airport H-TEC fuel account card with you when you go there. (if you haven't got one with you, you will have to go over to the Main Terminal apron to uplift fuel from the bowsers instead).

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)

ALOUETTE FLYING CLUB

It has been a surprisingly emotional month here at Alouette. After announcing our forthcoming closure at the end of February I have received many lovely messages from old members and old Biggin Hill'ites to whom Alouette meant an awful lot. The stories were very much of their time - tall tales of derring do, things that would send shockwaves through today's hi-viz culture - but the sentiment is inescapable; Alouette has meant an awful lot, to an awful lot of people.

Such is the scope of Alouette's existence that the club had been in operation for five years before my mother was even born. Put into a human scale it is a breathtaking achievement that Alouette has survived this long. What saddened me most in reading these messages from previous members is that I have missed the heyday not only of Alouette but of aviation in this country. Born in the wrong era, me thinks.

I would also just like to address some of the rumours that have inevitably surfaced after our closure announcement. Firstly, Alouette has not gone bust. We have seen a significant decrease both in membership, member involvement and sheer flying revenue since surviving the pandemic. We can all pontificate on the reasons for that in our own time, but the club categorically has not run out of money. We have taken this decision now precisely because we have not yet run out of money, and we can shutdown in the right and proper manner.

Secondly, we have not been asked to leave by the Biggin Hill airport management. It is no secret that there are operational difficulties in attracting students to Biggin Hill. The landing fees are high, we have to go elsewhere for circuits which adds a significant cost, and even the tedious, time-consuming and actually rather costly process, instigated by the DfT, of obtaining a security pass are all headaches for based pilots and are all reasons we have seen students leave. None of that really is a surprise. But I want to make it absolutely crystal clear that the decision to close Alouette was made by Alouette, not by the airport. We have long maintained a good rapport with the management and they have been exceptionally helpful throughout the last few years.

Finally I would like to extend an invite to you all for the closing party taking place in the Alouette

clubhouse on Saturday February 18th, kicking off officially at 1500. We have an awful lot of bar stock to get through so I will likely be there from around lunchtime. Please do come along and help us in bidding farewell to an institution of life at Biggin Hill for the past 64 years.

Hope to see you there. Until next month.....

Stuart Taylor-Kean
Chairman - Alouette Flying Club

MONTHLY NEWS FROM THE CEO'S OFFICE

A very belated Happy New Year to everyone!

January has been a challenging month for the Airport that has seen traffic levels slightly down on 2022 but still well above pre pandemic levels. The Airport remains busy and this bodes well for a solid performance throughout the last quarter of this financial year. The financial environment remains challenging and the cost of doing business has increased for everyone, something the Airport is very conscious of as it reviews the fees and charges for 2023/24. The Airport is currently focused on preparing its budget for 23/24 and the critical challenge is the need to balance control of costs against continued investment in infrastructure.

In terms of development, the Hotel is fast approaching the final stages of construction with soft openings planned for late February and early March. Formal PC should be achieved early February and the Hotel teams are already working on familiarising themselves with the layout and operating procedures.

The Airport has completed the road and footpath resurfacing on Churchill Way from the roundabout to Wireless Way, leaving the area for the new Gatehouse and the cul-de-sac to Hangar 170, the only outstanding works to complete the overall project.

The Airport continues to engage with Mr Ecclestone regarding options for the development of West Camp. This remains an important strategic objective but will require detailed engagement with Heritage England and the LBB.

The Airport continues to see a strong demand for additional hangars and is meeting this demand through emerging contractual discussions. Clearly, such developments will go through the appropriate planning processes. The Airport has completed the works to re surface taxiway Alpha and construction of the new taxiway Bravo is well advanced.

The Airport's conversion of the old Jota building into a multiple user training facility is progressing at pace. This remains a short-term solution to address the more strategic need for an Aviation Training College. Discussions continue with training providers to seek their interest in a long-term solution. The training facility is on target to open on 16th February.

The Airport is currently in discussions with the CAA regarding a new ACP for an IFR approach to 03 and further engagement with London City Airport and NATS has resulted in both parties being content with the Airport's proposal for the 21 RNAV overlay. The Airport will be submitting the Stage 3 Consultation Strategy and Full Options Appraisal documentation by July 2023, which is the new Gateway. Following consultation, according to the revised timeline, the CAA approval will be provided in January 2024, targeting the 04/2024 AIRAC, which will be effective in April 2024.

Thank you
Regards
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

(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)

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 in the past) please let me know or tell them about us – Database membership is, of course, free.

That's it for this month.

Enjoy your flying - Please stay well and stay safe.....

Best wishes

John Willis - Biggin Hill Airport Users Database

And Finally: As usual, a few amusing stories that, according to the many comments I receive about this section, is very popular amongst the membership. (As always, no offence to anyone is ever intended!).
- a few relatively amusing short stories....

Thanks to everyone for sending their contributions to this section. To avoid me running out of them, please keep them coming by email to john@bigginhillreunited.co.uk

QUOTE.....

Did You Know These Apparent Facts.....?

It takes 7 seconds for food to pass from mouth to stomach.

A human hair can hold 3 Kilos.

The length of a penis is three times the length of the thumb.

The femur is as hard as concrete.

A woman's heart beats faster than a man's.

Women blink twice as many times as men.

We use 300 muscles just to keep our balance when we stand.

A woman has read this entire text.

A man is still looking at his thumb.....!

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

A mother-in-law arrives home from shopping to find her son-in-law Paddy, in a steaming rage and hurriedly packing his suitcase.

"What happened Paddy?" she asks anxiously.

"What happened? I'll tell you what happened! I sent an email to my wife telling her I was coming home today from my fishing trip. I get home... and guess what I found? Your daughter, my wife Jean, naked with Joe Murphy in our marital bed! This is unforgivable! The end of our marriage. I'm done. I'm leaving forever!"

"Ah now, calm down, calm down Paddy!" says his mother-in-law. "There is something very odd going on here. Jean would never do such a thing! There must be a simple explanation. I'll go speak to her immediately and find out what happened."

Moments later, the mother-in-law comes back with a big smile. "Paddy, there, I told you it must be a simple explanation... She never received your e-mail!"

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

A little old lady goes to the doctor and says, "Doctor I have this problem with gas, but it really doesn't bother me too much. My farts never smell and are always silent. As a matter of fact, I've farted at least 20 times since I've been here in your office. You didn't know I was farting because they don't smell and are silent."

The doctor says, "I see, take these pills and come back to see me next week."

The next week the lady comes back.

"Doctor," she says, "I don't know what you gave me, but now my farts...although still silent...stink terribly."

The doctor says, "Good! Now that we've cleared up your sinuses, let's work on your hearing."

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

Want to learn how to speak with an Irish accent? Just say these four words quickly.....

Whale

Oil

Beef

Hooked

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

A highway patrolman pulled alongside a speeding car on the freeway. Glancing at the car, he was astounded to see that the blonde behind the wheel was knitting! Realising that she was oblivious to his flashing lights and siren, the trooper cranked down his window, turned on his bullhorn and yelled, "PULL OVER!"

"NO!" the blonde yelled back, "IT'S A SCARF!"

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

A few short quickies.....

What did the toaster say to the slice of bread? "I want you inside me."

"Give it to me! Give it to me!" she yelled. "I'm so wet, give it to me now!" She could scream all she wanted, but I was keeping the umbrella.

Two men broke into a drugstore and stole all the Viagra. The police put out an alert to be on the lookout for the two hardened criminals.

They say that during sex you burn off as many calories as running eight miles. Who the hell runs eight miles in 30 seconds?

I'll admit it, I have a tremendous sex drive. My girlfriend lives 40 miles away.

What do a penis and a Rubik's Cube have in common? The more you play with it, the harder it gets.

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

Irish Fire Insurance

A man and his wife moved back home to County Cork, from London.

The wife had a wooden leg and to insure it in Britain was £2,000.00 a year!

When they arrived in Bailieborough, they went to an Insurance agency to see how much it would cost to insure the wooden leg.

The agent looked it up on the computer and said to the couple, "€39.00".

The husband was shocked and asked why it was so cheap here in Ireland to insure, because it cost him £2,000.00 in England!

The agent turned his computer screen to the couple and said, "Well, here it is on the screen, it says:

'Any wooden structure, with a sprinkler system over it, is €39.00.'

I often do find the Irish Logic far superior to most others.

.....UNQUOTE

(If anyone else has good examples of, for example: - Governmental stupidity and removal of the population's right to live a normal life, or simply any funny, unusual and interesting stories or anecdotes that you feel may interest or amuse our readers, please email them to me as a possible inclusion in a monthly "and Finally"...))