

Hi everyone

Welcome to the July 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.

Just to explain why this month's newsletter is somewhat briefer than usual, I have spent most of June away in Portugal (from around the 7th through to the small hours of the morning of 26th June. So apologies if I have missed anything that has happened during this month, or maybe just made a brief comment...

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!)

JUNE WEATHER

Although I haven't been here for much of the month, odd emails I've received whilst away seem to suggest that, at last, we have actually had a real Summer Time weather, and I'm guessing this has resulted in a significant period for GA flying training and touring, etc.

I'm also assuming this month has been good at last for our based private owners and clubs to make serious use of their aircraft and, in the case of the training clubs, to get their students back into the air regularly, without the weather cancellations that have affected us all pretty much since last Autumn.

Keep our fingers crossed that the flyable weather will remain with us for several months now to ensure good training and touring continues...

THE UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL

I'm not personally a football fan, but I have to admit that I was actually impressed with the executive jet traffic arriving at Biggin Hill bringing in fans and teams on the 1st June.

I understand that the pre-booked in traffic was around 72 jets of varying sizes, and that was a massive planning exercise for the staff to ensure they could park them all, and of course, handle the passengers and crew. The airport effectively had three handling FBO locations, including the Airport's Training "Hub", which was set up as a temporary FBO location (for the first time I believe) for some of the smaller jets parked on the Southeast Apron.

So Biggin Hill literally became probably the busiest Corporate Jet airport since the setup to encourage that form of traffic to financially secure the airport's future. Very impressive!

But, as an aside, the airport literally stopped virtually all light aircraft operations over that weekend, at the very last minute, without pre-notification and planning for based owners and operators, causing much upset within the full time Biggin Hill based businesses. Whilst the airport had to operate on a positive safety basis of course, it was not a particularly professional way of enabling such organisations to pre-plan their operations in advance, rather than private owners and members booked to fly but unable to do anything even after setting up the aircraft's departure plans. The GA businesses totally lost the ability to operate and generate income to run their businesses over that weekend! Generally, this was not particularly well supportive of the businesses that are based at

the airport. In my opinion, forward notice, discussions, and planning with based operators should definitely have been carried by the airport.

COBBY

As we were all made aware, our friend, Cobby, sadly died back in April, which was a shock to so many of us...

As you will all recall, Cobby's daughter, Mel Luck, very kindly notified us all of his sad passing on the Facebook Group, Biggin Hill Reunited, and let us know that it was her intention to arrange a gathering at Biggin Hill for his friends and family to get together to raise a glass or two in memory of our friend.

Whilst I was away, Mel kindly again used the Biggin Hill Reunited Facebook group to notify us all of the plans for a meeting on the afternoon of Sunday 16th June, which would have been Cobby's 90th birthday, for Cobby's ashes to be scattered over Biggin Hill Airport.

She arranged the special gathering at the Lookout Cafe from 2-5pm, with some sandwiches on arrival, and with drinks and snacks available to purchase. The ashes drop from one of Cobby's old aircraft was set up to take place around 15:00 local, obviously with dependency on the weather and the Air Traffic permitting the drop.

I have heard from any of you that the day was very special and attended by many of Cobby's friends.

As Mel advised us all that it goes without saying that Cobby wasn't a flower man, but if you wanted to make a donation in his honour, she would be making a donation to [Macmillan Cancer Support](#) in his name, which was as a thank you to the manager of his final care home, who was extremely supportive of her.

As she explained, if any of his friends would like to support the payment of his cremation etc. this would also be most welcome. She had privately funded everything herself, as both his partner and family chose not to have any involvement.

Apparently, you can use PayPal or get in touch with her and just let her know where you would like your donation to go.

(PayPal link: https://paypal.me/MelissaLuck?country.x=GB&locale.x=en_GB).

More about Cobby from an old Biggin Hill'ite....

QUOTE.....

Flip me Cobby, you finally stalled and whistled in before we could catch up with you.

Since the 60's, to more recent times, you were considered the old man of Biggin Hill and you will be sadly missed by all those who came to know you in your surroundings of vintage aircraft.

You had amazing talent for restoring wonderful aircraft and we were lucky enough to work with you and have some of your skills rub off on us.

For those who you employed over the years, starting with Ken, Gary, Tony, JB, Dick, John Mackenzie, Norman Niblock, and myself, Chris C, can honestly say that most of the time it was fun and enjoyable, the banter was fantastic, particularly the tea and toast at Dillow's, where many a flight hour was accrued.

The wonderful trips to La Took and the brilliant flying, particularly on boxing days, was a must attend to enjoy the flower bombing and repelling the attacks from Redhill. These were truly, truly, marvellous days, which are all still fresh in our memories and will remain so.

You were the airfields resident Fireman, spending hours trying to start the fire engine in all weathers.

Well, there it is Cobby, no more struggling and all we can say is rest in peace and if you get a minute, find out if runway 29 grass is serviceable and, in the meantime, QSY Biggin 129 decimal 4, (*old info and comments – Ed.*)

God Bless.

From Chris Currie

.....UNQUOTE

RAY WATSON'S SPECIAL DAY

As you will recall I'm sure that Ray Watson and I flew together on 24th May in the AA5 when the Care Home arranged with me to visit to the Lookout Café and Ray was then surprised with the flight arrangement for him. Obviously I reported that and the details of the day in last month's Newsletter..

As I've been away until 26th in Portugal, and I have been struggling to think of things to write this month – But Ray's Care Home have prepared a press release about the day, which they have agreed I can use here. So here it is.....

QUOTE.....

Sky's the limit! Retired RAF pilot has wish to fly again made a reality

A care home in Sevenoaks organised a special trip for an RAF veteran to take to the skies once again.

When the team at Care UK's Weald Heights on Burchier Close learned that 91-year-old Ray Watson was keen to dust off his pilot's hat and fly a plane for the first time in one and a half years, they were determined to make it happen.

After first taking to the skies at the age of 18, Ray joined the RAF where he spent 27 years serving his country. Following his RAF career, Ray spent his later years working as a flying instructor at Biggin Hill. He also achieved the Guild of Air Pilots and Navigators prestigious Master Air Pilot Award in 2009. He achieved well over 21,000 flying hours and in excess of 12,000 instructional hours in a flying career spanning over 70 years. Keen to put his skills to the test and see if he still had the knack, Ray was delighted to return to the cockpit.

The team at Weald Heights and John Willis from Biggin Hill Reunited and the MP Flying Club organized for Ray to fly in a Grumman AA5B Tiger aircraft at Biggin Hill, where he was joined by John, who Ray had renewed his Instructors Rating 10 years ago.

Commenting on the experience, Ray said: "There's no better feeling than flying! During my time with the RAF, I took every opportunity I could to take to the skies, so I was incredibly excited to be back in the cockpit."

The visit was part of the home's Wishing Tree initiative, which encourages residents to put wishes forward, allowing them to reconnect with a past hobby or try something completely new – from flying on a plane to enjoying a fish and chip supper, no wish is too big or small.

Maria Covington, Home Manager at Weald Heights, said: “Ray absolutely loved his flying lessons, and is always sharing fond memories of his time in the sky, so when he told us he was interested in getting back in the cockpit, the team knew they had to make it happen.

“Our wishing tree initiative is a great way for residents to share their dreams and interests, and it’s so rewarding to be able to make these a reality. Ray had a wonderful time and was delighted to be able to fly again once more – he’s already talking about his next trip!

“I’d like to extend a big thank you to the team here at Weald Heights, as well as to Biggin Hill, for making Ray’s wish come true!”

(To find out more about Weald Heights, please contact Customer Relations Manager, Amelia Moore, on 01732 809 189, or email amelia.moore2@careuk.com

Weald Heights is a purpose-built care home designed to deliver luxury hotel-style comfort for residents, complete with a café, hair and beauty salon, cinema and beautiful gardens. The home is divided into separate residential, nursing and dementia care suites, encouraging close-knit communities where residents can get to know each other, and where people with similar needs can be cared for together.)

.....UNQUOTE

JULY BIGGIN HILL POSTED FUEL PRICES

The “posted” Biggin Hill Airport fuel prices, excluding VAT, for the calendar month of July 2024 are:

£1:80.9 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 – and an additional 1p per litre off if also paid by Direct Debit)

£0:87.2 per litre for Jet A1 (Sustainable Aviation Fuel £1:10.7 per litre)

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).

BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT – A MAJOR LONDON CENTRE FOR CORPORATE AND GA OPS

Having been away most of this month, apart from the football traffic on 1st June mentioned above, I haven’t really got much that I can comment on the airport and facilities for this period.

Of course, I do know that the traffic into and out of Biggin Hill has been showing excellent volumes of Corporate Jet’s at the airport. And the airport does currently remain a reasonably good base for light aircraft training and private operations for us all..

Let’s hope it will hopefully always remain a good airport for us all to operate from and participate in our activities there....

FALCON / EFG

Greetings from Falcon / EFG

Well look what we have here, flying weather!

That's right, our students and pilot have been making the most with flyouts, QXCs, Solo flights and some good old fashioned dead reckoning. The Tower has been kept busy by all manner of traffic and we are grateful to them for keeping us all safe and on the straight and narrow.

Exciting news is the arrival of our Piper Seneca V equipped with 3x Garmin G1000, FIKI Approved and Club Seating. For all your MEP and IR renewals, revals and initial training, you know where to come.

The hangar has been busy keeping your aircraft serviceable and, in the sky, those folks really work some magic!

Till the next time.

Be blessed, fly safe, watch out for the NSAs

Best Regards

Anoop Singh Bamrah

MONTHLY NEWS FROM THE CEO'S OFFICE

June saw the Airport experience its business weekend in its history for business aviation movements. The weekend of the Champions League Final saw unprecedented demand and saw the Airport operate 3 FBOs simultaneously, utilising the training hub as a satellite FBO for the first time. The weekend was made more challenging given that the wind favoured runway 03, which required tactical flow coordination with NATS that impacted upon our PPR procedures. I am aware many in the GA community took heed of the Airport's safety notice issued on 17th May warning of disruption and elected to make alternative plans. The Airport's performance throughout the rest of June was as equally impressive.

The pressures of the industry remain, although we are starting to see schedule services predict movement levels more than pre COVID levels. The Business Aviation sector is starting to see similar strong performance. Notwithstanding this, the London market figures show the Airport's share marginally stabilising at around 21%, with Luton and Farnborough hovering around the 28% mark.

The Airport continues its development programme to improve existing infrastructure and improve its service offering to customers. The Airport is in discussing with key MRO providers to base their operations at the Airport in either existing hangars or new builds. The Airport has now completed the installation of the new Instrument Runway Visual Range (IRVR) system, which will eventually include 24-hour automated METAR reporting. The new IRVR system will need to undergo operational calibration prior to entering full operational use. Work also continues to plan for the runway resurfacing and introduction of centre line lighting in 2025.

Despite the focus on the forthcoming election, the launch of the Airport's Economic Footprint study has been extremely well received. The feedback has been extremely positive and the report has helped to reinforce the important role the Airport plays as a catalyst for inward investment, economic growth and job creation. The Airport site generates a GVA (gross value added) of £200 million to the UK economy and, importantly, £143m (70%) of this is captured within the London Borough of Bromley. Furthermore, the Airport is delighted to see it has been identified as a key area for economic growth in the draft Bromley Growth plan 2024 to 2027.

The continues to work alongside the CAA regarding the trial of the new instrument approach to Rwy 03. The CAA have confirmed the request constitutes a valid trial and is, therefore, both new and innovative. The CAA have acknowledged the Airport's objectives and outlined a phased approach to implement the trial. The Airport is now focused on obtaining IFP design approval and is still targeting to commence the trial by September this year.

As previously reported, the Airport continues to work hard to roll out the 2nd phase of its Air Quality Monitoring initiative with the installation of additional sensors. The monitors will have an increased number of sensors to detect SO₂ (Sulphur Dioxide), NO₂ (Nitrogen Dioxide), CO (Carbon Monoxide), VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds) and O₃ (Ground Ozone). The sensors will also detect Particulate matter 1, 2.5 and 10 micrograms of solid or liquid particles in the atmosphere. The Airport will be working with the newly formed Airport Residents' Noise Action Forum to see how the Airport might report on Air Quality in the future.

Kind 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. Also, 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 again for this month. Do enjoy your flying - Please do stay well and stay safe.....

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....

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

QUOTE.....

A wife sent her husband a romantic text message.
She wrote: "If you are sleeping, send me your dreams.

If you are laughing, send me your smile.

If you are eating, send me a bite.

If you are drinking, send me a sip.

If you are crying, send me your tears. I love you."

Her husband texted back: "I'm on the toilet, please advise."
.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

Two friends drinking in their local. One says to the other 'my wife's gone to the Caribbean '. His friend asks 'Jamaica?' His friend replies 'no she went of her own accord'!

How do you get 4 elephants in a Morris Minor? 2 in the front, 2 in the back.
.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

3 nuns get killed in a car crash and end up at the Pearly Gates.

St Peter doesn't let them enter straight away. He explains each will have to answer a question correctly before entry to heaven.

Starting with the youngest nun first he asks, "what was the name of the first woman on earth?" To which she replied "Eve".

"That's right" St Peter said and invited her through the pearly gates.

The second question to the next nun was "where did Adam and Eve live?"

She answered immediately "the garden of Eden".

"That's right" said St Peter and invited her into heaven.

Turning to the last nun he explained that being senior and a long serving nun she'd have to answer a more difficult question.

To her he asked "What were the first words Eve said to Adam".

She wracked her brains for a few minutes then said "Wow that's a hard one"

To which St Peter replied "that's correct! Enter into heaven".

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

A Blast from the Past. Ode to a Spellchecker

Eye halve a spelling chequer,
It came with my pea sea.
It plainly marques four my revue,
miss steaks eye kin knot sea.

Eye strike a quay and type a word,
and weight four it to say!
Weather eye am wrong oar write,
it shows me strait a weigh.

As soon as a mist ache is maid,
it nose bee fore two long,
And eye can put the error rite,
its rare lee ever wrong.

Aye have run this poem threw it,
I am shore your pleased two no?
Its letter perfect awl the weigh,
my chequer tolled me sew.

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

His Lordship was in the Study at Downton Abbey when Carson the butler approached and coughed discreetly. 'May I ask you a question, my Lord?'

'Go ahead, Carson,' said his lordship.

'I am doing a crossword in 'The Times' and I have found a word about which I am not too clear.'

'What word is that?' asked his lordship.

'The word is 'aplomb', my lord.'

'That is a difficult word to explain. I would say it means 'self-assurance' or 'complete composure'.'

'Thank you, my lord, but I'm still a little confused.'

'Then, let me give you an example to make it clearer. Do you remember a few months ago the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge arrived to spend a weekend with us?'

'Of course, my lord, I remember the occasion very well. It gave the staff and myself much pleasure to look after them.'

'Also', continued the Earl of Grantham, 'Do you remember that William plucked a rose for Kate in the rose garden?'

'I was indeed present on that occasion, my lord.'

'And while plucking the rose, a thorn embedded itself very deeply in his thumb?'

'Yes,' replied Carson. 'I witnessed the incident, my lord, and saw the Duchess herself remove the thorn and bandage his thumb with her own dainty handkerchief.'

'And that evening, the prick on his thumb was so sore that Kate had to cut up his venison, even though being from our own estate it was extremely tender.'

'Yes, my lord, I saw and heard what transpired.'

'Then the next morning, while you were pouring coffee for Her Ladyship, Kate enquired of William, 'Darling is your prick still throbbing this morning? ' 'And you, Carson, did not spill one drop of coffee! That was aplomb!'

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

I took my dad to the shopping centre the other day to buy some new shoes (he is 84).

We decided to grab a bite to eat at a food stall. I noticed he was watching a teenager sitting next to him. The teenager had spiked hair in all different colours: green, red, orange, and blue.

My dad kept staring at him.

The teenager would look and find him staring every time.

When the teenager had had enough, he sarcastically asked: 'What's the matter old man, never done anything wild in your life?'

Knowing my Dad, I quickly swallowed my food so that I would not choke on his response; knowing he would have a good one.

And in classic style he did not bat an eye in his response: 'Got stoned once and f*cked a peacock. I was just wondering if you were my son.'

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

Paddy McCoy, an elderly Irish farmer, received a letter from the Department for Work & Pensions stating that they suspected he was not paying his employees the statutory minimum wage and they would send an inspector to interview them.

On the appointed day, the inspector turned up. "Tell me about your staff," he asked Paddy.

"Well," said Paddy, "there's the farm hand, I pay him £240 a week, and he has a free cottage. Then there's the housekeeper. She gets £190 a week, along with free board and lodging. There's also the half-wit. He works a 16 hour day, does 90% of the work, earns about £25 a week along with a bottle of whisky and, as a special treat, occasionally gets to sleep with my wife."

"That's disgraceful" said the inspector, "I need to interview the half-wit."

"That'll be me then," said Paddy

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

Divorce Settlement.

On the first day, he sadly packed his belongings into boxes, crates and suitcases.

On the second day, he had the movers come and collect his things.

On the third day, he sat down for the last time at their beautiful dining-room table, by candle-light; he put on some soft background music, and feasted on a pound of shrimp, a jar of caviar, and a bottle of red wine.

When he'd finished, he went into each and every room and deposited a few half-eaten shrimps dipped in caviar into the hollow centre of the curtain rods. He then cleaned up the kitchen and left.

On the fourth day, the wife came back with her new boyfriend, and at first all was bliss. Then, slowly, the house began to smell. They tried everything; cleaning, mopping, and airing-out the place. Vents were checked for dead rodents, and carpets were steam cleaned. Air fresheners were hung everywhere.

Exterminators were brought in to set off gas canisters, during which time the two had to move out for a few days, and in the end, they even paid to replace the expensive wool carpeting. Nothing worked!

People stopped coming over to visit. Repairmen refused to work in the house. The maid quit.

Finally, they couldn't take the stench any longer, and decided they had to move, but a month later, even though they'd cut their price in half, they couldn't find a buyer for such a stinky house.

Word got out, and eventually even the local estate agents refused to return their calls.

Finally, unable to wait any longer for a purchaser, they had to borrow a huge sum of money from the bank to purchase a new place.

Then the ex called the woman and asked how things were going. She told him the saga of the rotting house.

He listened politely and said that he missed his old home terribly and would be willing to reduce his divorce settlement in exchange for having the house.

Knowing he could have no idea how bad the smell really was, she agreed on a price that was only 1/10th of what the house had been worth; but only if he would sign the papers that very day.

He agreed, and within two hours her solicitor delivered the completed paperwork.

A week later the woman and her boyfriend stood smiling as they watched the moving company pack everything to take to their new home, and just to spite the ex-husband, they even took the curtain rods!!

.....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"...)