

Hi everyone

Welcome to the March 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 JB's Biggin Hill "Bugle", by visiting the club website at www.bigginhillclub.co.uk

BIGGIN HILL WEATHER IN FEBRUARY

After a dubious start, to be expected at this time of the year of course, the end of February has been the best February weather I think I can ever remember. Clearly we don't expect it to remain, but it is encouraging to be able to fly in shirtsleeve just 12 months after the "Beast from the East" deposited all that snow on the UK and stopped us flying...

We have had record high temperatures, and smooth clear flying conditions for about a week, and everyone seems to have taken full advantage of the conditions to get into the air... Long may it continue, and lets hope this is the forerunner to a wonderful year for our chosen hobby.

FESTIVAL OF FLIGHT 2019

The airport has confirmed the dates for this year's Festival Of Flight as 17th and 18th August 2019. Unfortunately, as many of you will already know, the Red Arrows will be unable to appear at this year's show, as the team will be carrying out a tour of North America at the time of the show.

Clearly this will disappoint many visitors, but the airport has just announced that there will be a welcome return to the show of the Breitling Jet Team, which was last seen at Biggin Hill in 2008.

Tickets will apparently be going on sale for the show at the beginning of April.

TOM MENHAM

It is with great sadness I report the death of old Biggin Hill'ite, Tom Menham, on 25th February after a fall at home. He was 89.

As the older members will probably remember, Tom was originally an engineer for many years with Bristow Helicopters. He learnt to fly with Sportair Flying Club at Biggin in the early 70's.

When he left Bristows in the mid 70's, ex-instructor at Sportair, Gordon Franks, then the pilot for Micro Consultants (later Quantel) at Biggin Hill, invited Tom to join them as an engineer on their various aircraft (Cessna Citation, Aero Commander AC500, Siai Marchetti SF260, and Hughes 500, to name but a few). Tom remained there until he retired in 1994.

His son, Paul, who used to be a general "dogsbody" in the Sportair hangar, reports that his father remained very active and was always working on some project or another. As he said, it was very fitting that, when he was found after his fall, he was tightly clutching a hammer!

When funeral details are known, which is likely to be before the next Newsletter, I will post details on the bigginhillreunited Facebook page

R.I.P. Tom

END OF AN ERA

On 4th February the airport issued a press release to announce that the current Managing Director, Will Curtis, was standing down on 31st March to pursue other interests after six years at the helm.

Will followed on in the footsteps of Roy Taylor, Mark Campbell, Keith Waud, "Crash" Amos, Peter Lonergan, and Jenny Munro. Continuing Jenny's open and active communication with the local residents and users, Will has headed the team that has ensured Biggin Hill Airport's continued survival and expansion to secure the airports long term future.

Particularly responsible for enabling the airport's lease to be extended to allow for increased operational hours, with the active co-operation of airport users, and the airport has gone from strength to strength during his tenure.

Often criticised by light aviation users, Will has actually been a supporter of light aircraft flying at Biggin Hill (albeit understanding the need to limit heavy circuit training, and to stop the more cavalier users who simply didn't recognise the need for changes from the way things were in the 60's), and has worked tirelessly in the background to minimise the effects of the airports inevitable and necessary expansion on such users. As is often the way, I think the extent of his support will probably not really be appreciated until he has gone.

He will continue to operate in a consultancy roll at the airport to continue the various projects such as the introduction of the complex London airspace changes and the instrument approach for runway 03, but he intends to follow his other active interests in aviation and outside. We can expect to hear Will's voice on the radio as he will be joining the Heritage Hangar's team of Spitfire pilots flying the two seater air experience flights in the iconic aircraft throughout the busy Summer season.

I'm sure many would wish me to pass on your best wishes to Will for his future projects. From my own part, thank you for working in the background to lessen the effects of our airport's expansion, and communicating so regularly via this Newsletter to keep us all in touch with plans and changes. Without you there for the last six years, I feel certain that light aviation at Biggin would have suffered far more than it actually has.

IN WITH THE NEW

The press release issued by the airport on 4th February announcing Will Curtis' departure, also of course announced his replacement.

"He will be succeeded by David Winstanley, who will take up his appointment on 1st March 2019 as London Biggin Hill's first CEO. David will lead a management team that has made London Biggin Hill one of the most successful business aviation airports in Europe and home to a growing community of aviation maintenance businesses.

David began his career in the Royal Air Force as an air traffic controller and rose to become a wing commander. He joined Birmingham Airport in 2007 and took on positions of increasing seniority, becoming Chief Operating Officer in 2014, a position he held until April 2018."

Of David's new roll, Andrew Walters, Chairman of London Biggin Hill, says: "With the support of our local community, London Biggin Hill is enjoying increasing success. Our extended operating hours and significant investment in facilities helped us to outperform the market strongly in 2018, with a 12% increase in aircraft movements and further direct and indirect job creation. We are delighted to have attracted someone of David Winstanley's calibre as CEO, whose deep understanding of airport operations and outstanding leadership skills will enable us to further enhance Biggin Hill's position as the premier business aviation centre for London."

Confirming Will's decision to leave in order to pursue his other aviation interests, Andrew Walters also explained that Will has agreed to continue advising the airport on the Civil Aviation Authority's reorganisation of new air routes in and out of London and the South East. "Will Curtis joined the company at a critical time in the re-development of the airport," says Andrew Walters. "As a former customer helped us to shape and deliver our priorities, particularly our increased opening hours. I am hugely grateful to Will for all of his contribution to our success, and I am delighted that he will continue to look out for our future through representing our interests in the reorganisation of airspace in London and the South East."

Incoming CEO, David Winstanley says: "I am a huge admirer of what London Biggin Hill has achieved and excited to be joining a business with such a clear vision for its future. I very much look forward to helping shape the ongoing evolution of a family-owned business that cares about its community, the success of its tenant businesses and its hardworking people."

We will watch this space – time will tell whether the new CEO will be as open to communicate with us all, and support where possible ongoing light aviation at our airport. In the meantime, we would all wish to welcome him to this iconic and historic airfield and hope that he will maintain the historic mode of operation and keep our airport future secure for all categories of aviation, which can clearly co-exist well if the desire is there to make it happen.

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

Greetings from Alouette

What a scorcher the last few days of February were! Thankfully our Cessna 172 has windows!

Carol Voderman (of Countdown fame) and Mathew Bolshaw MP have given General Aviation a voice in Parliament with their "All Party Parliamentary Group on General Aviation"

With their background support and good weather 2019 may become a bumper year for us all.

Come and talk to us about it at our clubhouse this Wednesday 6th from 7:30pm. and enjoy our bar.

Regards
Bruno Bruniges

FALCON FLIGHT ACADEMY (inc EFG) & FALCON FLIGHT SERVICES

Greetings from all at Falcon

What a stunning end to the month! Whilst there is some unsettled weather to come, this heatwave can only mean one thing, flying, flying and more flying!

We've all been rushed off our feet with QXC, initial lessons and finishing off some patient students here at EFG. Confirmation of 3 students of ours being accepted into Cathay pacific and Ryan Air leaves us feeling proud as ever. The excellent standards led by Ray Watson, a brilliant aerodrome to operate from and a great selection of candidates creates the perfect formula over here.

Rushed off our feet with ab initio training, a host of professional licences and people finishing their IMC ratings please call us for all your flight training needs.

Maintenance has finished another major project and Shonu is very chuffed at the great work his team has done!

As ever for all your mods / defects and general maintenance look no further than Falcon. Give Singh a call on 01959 572 339 or email info@falcon.aero.

Till the next time

Stay blessed, fly safe, and don't forget noise abatement!

Singh, Shonu, Anoop
and all at Falcon & EFG

MONTHLY REPORT FROM THE OFFICE OF WILL CURTIS

February has been an average month for business aviation, but some exceptional weather has made for great flying conditions. Brexit is still affecting the mood for the business aviation community and we expect continued reduced volumes until this issue is resolved to some extent.

By now you will all have heard that I have, after careful consideration, resigned my post with Biggin Hill Airport with effect from March 31st. I am succeeded by David Winstanley and will begin my handover from the start of March. I am keen to pursue a business venture outside aviation, but I will be keeping a toe in the water by operating as an occasional Biggin Hill based pilot with the Heritage Hangar and a consultant to Biggin Hill Airport.

David brings with him a wealth of experience having formerly been a Wing Commander in the Royal Air Force and latterly, the COO and CEO of Birmingham Airport. I will try to introduce David to as many of you as possible during the March handover period. David will continue the strategy we have already set out and will take Biggin Hill forward very much in the current direction of travel. David is also ex Royal Air Force, so arguably Biggin Hill is regaining a proper 'Station Commander'!

It has been an enormous privilege to have been responsible for the operation and development of Biggin Hill, the most famous of our war time aerodromes. It has also been a privilege to work with you all over the past 6 years. Biggin Hill is, today, a very different airport from the airport I joined. Thanks in large part to your cooperation and assistance, Biggin Hill is a much safer aerodrome with, I believe, a very high standard of based light aircraft operator compared to the national norm.

The greatest change in the past 6 years has been the airport operating hours along with our relationship with the local population and the Council. I am conscious that not everyone will see the changes we have made as being positive, but they were realistically the only sensible option available to us in a world of increasing regulatory compliance and therefore, increased fixed costs.

Light aviation will always have a place at Biggin Hill, but this is no longer a cheap place from which to operate, having as it does, all weather capability, a full time fire service, an ATC unit and Border Force Airport of Entry designation. Clearly, the landing fees have to reflect this level of service provision. As they say, 'you pay your money and take your choice' and other brands are available for those that prefer a cheaper option.

In parting, I wish each and every one of you health, happiness and prosperity in your future ventures.

So, sadly, for the last time, safe flying!

Best regards
Will

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

That's it for this month.....

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 intended!). Thanks to everyone for sending their contributions....)

QUOTE.....

Forty gypsies arrive at the Pearly Gates in their Transit vans and caravans.

St Peter goes into the gatehouse and phones up GOD, saying: 'I've got 40 travellers here. Can I let them in?'

GOD replies 'We are over our quota on travellers. Go back out to the Pearly Gates and tell them to choose among them which are the 12 most worthy, and I will let just the dozen in.'

Less than a minute later St Peter is on the phone to GOD again. 'They've gone', he tells GOD.

'What?' says GOD, 'All 40 of them?'

'No, the Pearly Gates'.

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

The doctor that had been seeing an 80-year-old woman for most of her life finally retired.

At her next checkup, the new Doctor told her to bring a list of all the medicines that had been prescribed for Her.

As the doctor was looking through these, his eyes grew wide as he realized Grandma had a prescription for birth control pills.

"Mrs. Smith, do you realize these are BIRTH CONTROL Pills?"

"Yes, they help me sleep at night."

"Mrs. Smith, I assure you there is absolutely NOTHING in these that could possibly help you sleep!"

She reached out and patted the young Doctor's knee...."Yes, dear, I know that. But every morning, I grind one up and mix it in the glass of orange juice that my 16 year old Granddaughter drinks. and believe me, it definitely helps me sleep at night."

You gotta Love Grandmas

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

Students in an advanced Biology class were taking their mid-term exam.

The last question was, 'Name seven advantages of Mother's Milk. The question was worth 70 points or none at all.

One student, was hard put to think of seven advantages. He wrote:

- 1) It is perfect formula for the child.
- 2) It provides immunity against several diseases.
- 3) It is always the right temperature.
- 4) It is inexpensive.
- 5) It bonds the child to mother, and vice versa.
- 6) It is always available as needed.

And then the student was stuck. Finally, in desperation, just before the bell rang indicating the end of the test, he wrote:

- 7) It comes in two attractive containers and it's high enough off the ground where the cat can't get it.

He got an A.

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

A blonde walks into a bank in Sydney and asks for the loan officer.

She says she's going to Hong Kong on business for two weeks and needs to borrow \$5,000.

The bank officer says the bank will need some kind of security for the loan, so the blonde hands over the keys to a new Mercedes.

The car is parked on the street in front of the bank, she has the title and everything checks out.

The bank agrees to accept the car as collateral for the loan.

The bank's manager and its officers all enjoy a good laugh at the blonde for using a \$250,000 Mercedes as collateral against a \$5,000 loan.

An employee of the bank then proceeds to drive the Mercedes into the bank's underground garage and parks it there.

Two weeks later, the blonde returns, repays the \$5,000 and the interest, which comes to \$15.41.

The loan office says, "Miss, we are very happy to have had your business, and this transaction has worked out very nicely, but we are a little puzzled. While you were away, we checked you out and found that you are a millionaire.

What puzzles us is, why would you bother to borrow \$5,000?"

The blonde replies...

"Where else in Sydney can I park my car for two weeks for only \$15.41 and expect it to be there when I return?"

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

An old Italian man in Brooklyn is dying. He calls his grandson to his bedside, "Guido, I wan' you lissina me. I wan' you to take-a my chrome plated ...38 revolver so you will always remember me."

"But grandpa, I really don't like guns.. How about you leave me your Rolex watch instead?"

"You lissina me, boy! Somma day you gonna be runna da business, you gonna have a beautiful wife, lotsa money, a big-a home and maybe a couple of bambinos. "

"Somma day you gonna come-a home and maybe finda you wife inna bed with another man. Whatta you gonna do then – point at your watch and say times up?"

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

Into a Belfast pub comes Paddy Murphy, looking like he'd just been run over by a train. His arm is in a sling, his nose is broken, his face is cut, and bruised, and he's walking with a limp.

'What happened to you?' asks Sean, the bartender.

'Michael O'Connor and me had a fight,' says Paddy

'That little skinny O'Connor?,' says Sean, 'How could he do that to you? He must have had something in his hand.'

'That he did,' says Paddy, 'a shovel is what he had, and a terrible beatin' he gave me with it.'

'Well,' says Sean, 'you should have defended yourself ta same. Didn't you have something in your hand?'

That I did,' said Paddy. 'Mrs. O'Connor's breast. And a thing of beauty it was to be sure; but useless in a fight.

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

Physicians were unable to reach a consensus: Should Brexit take place?

The Allergists were in favour of scratching it, but the Dermatologists advised not to make any rash moves.

The Gastroenterologists had sort of a gut feeling about it, but the Neurologists thought the Brexiters had a lot of nerve.

Meanwhile, Obstetricians felt certain everyone was labouring under a misconception, while the Ophthalmologists considered the idea shortsighted.

Pathologists yelled, "Over my dead body!" while the Pediatricians said, "Oh, grow up!"

The Psychiatrists thought the whole idea was madness, while the Radiologists could see right through it.

Surgeons decided to wash their hands of the whole thing and the Internists claimed it would indeed be a bitter pill to swallow.

The Plastic Surgeons opined that May's proposal would "put a whole new face on the matter." The Podiatrists thought it was a step forward, but the Urologists were pissed off at the whole idea.

Anesthesiologists thought it was all a gas, and those lofty Cardiologists didn't have the heart to say no.

In the end, the Proctologists won out, leaving the entire decision up to the asses in Parliament.

.....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" ...)