

Hi everyone

Welcome to the March 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!)

THE INVASION OF UKRAINE BY RUSSIA

I believe I can speak for almost everyone when I send our sincere sympathies and our support for our friends in Ukraine, who's Country is being attacked by a seemingly lunatic, power crazed, Russian leader, because he apparently wants total control of another democratic country – I seem to recall there was a similar psycho in the late 1930's and early 40's who had the same approach to such issues.

I believe that it would be very inappropriate while the Ukrainian people are suffering at the hands of this complete nutter to include the "and finally" jokes section at the end of this Newsletter, so this is withheld this month. I stress this is in sympathy with our friends and European neighbours, and NOT because I have been asked to remove it.

It will be back, I promise.....

FEBRUARY WEATHER

I'm honestly not quite sure where to start on the weather during February. At the beginning of the month, things for GA flying were not too bad I guess, and we were all able to do some flying.

But then!!!!

We were faced with three very major storms in relatively quick succession with forecasted incredibly strong gales that threatened all the airport's light aircraft from significant risk of serious damage. With winds forecast to gust up to the late 60kts and even early 70's, most were forced to seek hangarage or at least good shelter to try to avoid serious consequences. So, from about the 14th through to the 23rd/24th very few light aircraft moved at all, let alone flew. Then the last part of the month at least gave us a chance to get airborne again and resume training.

I know it is Winter, but usually we at least get a mix of rubbish weather interspersed with some beautifully clear and crisp days to enjoy our hobby.....

Here's hoping the worst maybe over and we can soon look forward to the arrival of Spring, with the (hopefully) good flying weather....

LIGHT AIRCRAFT ACTIVITY IN FEBRUARY

As described above, February has not been at all great for General Aviation (light aircraft) flying for much of the month, so there really isn't much point in me saying anything here....

BILL HEARN DEN

We received information from Daughter, Lynne, via airport colleagues, that our old friend from the early days of Biggin Hill, Bill Hearnden, sadly passed away on 14th February.

Bill was a Director of the Experimental Flying Group back in the late 50's and early 60's when I personally joined them and learnt to fly there with Rex Nicholls and Peter Elliot. Bill devoted so much of his time dealing with most of the administration for the Group seemingly effortlessly, and extremely efficiently.

A cheerful man, but very quiet and modest, he was a very gentle man. It was a real pleasure to know him back then.

Bill learnt to fly in the early days of Experimental at Redhill, taught by the legendary ATA pilot, Jean Bird, who was one of the Group's founder members.

He will, I'm absolutely certain, be sadly missed by his many friends and colleagues from those early days at Biggin Hill.

Rest in Peace Bill, your old friends will never forget you.....

Bill's name has been added to the Roll of Honour on the BigginHillReunited.co.uk website

AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS

As discussed in the previous newsletters, and reiterated in the Airport CEO's section below, the new developments at the airport are seemingly proceeding at a good pace, and the Hotel (The Landings) constructions are progressing impressively quickly. The new Bombardier complex is looking very close to being finished, and the start of the improvements to Churchill Way are already happening.

REMEMBERING DAVID PERRIN

An excellent personal article that was researched and written by a long term professional pilot and great fan of our old friend and Biggin Hill'ite David Perrin.....

“David Roger Perrin was a very gifted, young, aerobatic pilot who rose to prominence in the 1970's.

Growing up close to Biggin Hill airfield he was enthralled by aviation, and would do all he could to be around aircraft and cadge flights where he could. He started flying lessons at the age of 14, and had to wait until his 17th birthday (*the rules in those days – Ed*) before he could fly his 'first solo'. Which he did, to the day!

It is said that he could fly a decent slow roll, before he had even learned how to land properly. It was clear where his interests were heading...

He went on to become a flying instructor in his late teens, and flew his first displays in Fournier motor gliders and Stampe biplanes.

David's talent was spotted early and he was invited to join the world famous Rothmans Aerobatic Team at the age of just 20, being their first pilot to join without a military flying background. He excelled within the team and was soon flying as deputy leader and solo performer.

A short film of his work was made in 1982 titled 'Man in the sky'. It gives an insight into the pleasant character, and humble nature of this phenomenal young man. See the film here:

https://www.bridgemanimages.com/en/noartistknown/man-in-the-sky/35mm/asset/693985?fbclid=IwAR1xsV5Zi2-qEXQXGkbiE2_mGh3nfRwXLt8qcL5ta8AUkBEacTNJID6mHJo

or

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VDHgABm2f6E>

Tragically David was killed just weeks later when flying as a passenger in an Alouette 2 helicopter, along with two other men. It was 22 May 1982. He was just 28 years old.

My interest in his life and work came from watching the film mentioned above, and not knowing how it had ended until the sombre message appeared at the end. I was very shocked, and then tried to find out all I could about this tragic story and very noteworthy British pilot.

My research has taken me along a few interesting paths, with the highlight being the acquisition of his flying helmet, something that I now cherish, and I will look after for the remainder of my flying life.

I have also located his place of rest in Biggin Hill and spent a little time paying respects and tidying his patch.

I discovered there was very little information about him online, and I hope my small tribute page in Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/ROTHMANSSOLO>) will keep him in mind as we approach the 40th anniversary of his passing.

Remember David R Perrin - One of Britain's finest aerobatic pilots."

[Our grateful thanks to the author, Paul Gibbs from Inverness (owner G-NIPR / G-SAHJ), who kindly granted his permission for me to reproduce his article on our old friend, David Perrin - Ed]

MARCH BIGGIN HILL POSTED FUEL PRICES

The "posted" Biggin Hill Airport fuel prices, excluding VAT, for the calendar month of March 2022 are:

£1:89.1 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)

£0:82.7 per litre for Jet A1 (or £1:13.5 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 USER

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

Two things to make you aware of from Alouette HQ this month.

The first is a reminder of the monthly social evening next Wednesday 2nd March from 19:30. Cheap beer and aviation chatter - what's not to like?

All are welcome, and there is absolutely no need for you to be an existing club member, as you can become a long-term social member on the night, for free, by simply filling in our social membership form. We would really love to welcome many of you to the club, which has become the only licenced bar on the airport nowadays.

The second, bigger, and much more exciting piece of news is that Alouette once again has a second aeroplane! G-AVSP is a PA28-180C equipped with an Aspen PFD, Garmin 430 and basic autopilot, making her an excellent touring aircraft for those of you looking to make the most of a sunny summer weekend.

And the best bit? This aircraft will cost exactly the same as G-ICOM, our sturdy C172! Don't say we don't look after you here.

Now all we need is for the weather to cheer up a bit so we can make the most of both our aircraft!

I do hope to see many of you at the social next Wednesday.

That's all from me so, until next month, enjoy your flying.

Stuart Taylor
Club Chairman

MONTHLY NEWS FROM THE CEO'S OFFICE

Although we are only 2 months in 2022 and we have all been encouraged to 'live with COVID', the global geopolitical landscape would indicate that 2022 could be more challenging than the previous 2 years of fighting a pandemic. Whilst the world condemns Russian aggression and sanctions are imposed from almost every continent, we are faced with huge uncertainty regarding the impact on our economy and our industry. The huge human tragedy is hard to contemplate and all the more devastating as it comes on the back of a global pandemic.

Paradoxically, the outlook for Business Aviation and the Airport was and remains cautiously optimistic. There are difficult challenges ahead and forecasting respective impacts from global events is fraught with danger; however, the majority of the Airports traffic is towards central Europe and the business has proved its resilience and adaptability through recent challenges.

Traffic levels throughout February were very strong, especially at either end of half term where the Airport saw record daily movements. Notwithstanding the storms last weekend, the weather has been favourable throughout January and February and if this trend continues throughout March, the Airport will have a strong end to its financial year.

Notwithstanding the geopolitical challenges, in terms of development, 2022 could be a seminal year for the Airport. The Bombardier hangar moves ever closer to completion and the Airport is on target for a practical completion by mid-March. The Landing Hotel development continues to move at pace and the community will not only see this in terms of building construction but also via the Hotel website which will shortly provide further information on the hotel offering. The opening of the Hotel is planned for Nov/Dec this year.

The Airport continues to invest in Churchill way and many of you will have seen these works progress throughout January and February. The Airport is progressing with a number of hangar alterations and developments as well as further resurfacing activities. The Airport continues to work with the CAA regarding the 03 RNAV approach approval and the progression of the Air Space Change for the 21 RNAV overlay.

Finally, the Airport continues to engage with the Airport Consultative Committee regarding the current Noise Abatement Procedures and thanks the community for its continued adherence to the NAP and supporting the Airport in being a responsible and good neighbour to local residents.

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

(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.....

John Willis
Biggin Hill Airport Users Database

The normal "And Finally" section has been withheld this month for the reasons described above. Our hearts are with the Ukrainian people.

Jokes would have been inappropriate in my opinion. Sorry if any database members disagree.....

The very popular section will return....