

Hi everyone

The May edition of the Biggin Hill Airport "BUGLE" by John Bryan is available for viewing/downloading on the Social Club's website at <http://www.bigginhillclub.co.uk>

Please remember to send JB any stories of interest, and photos, for inclusion in future issues. It's your newsletter so please help JB to keep it coming...

(his direct email address is johnbryan@jbpltstd.demon.co.uk, or you can send items directly to me to pass on)

EMAIL ADDRESS UPDATES AND ADDITIONS

Keep passing those new and amended email addresses to me. There have also been a number of new members registering on the database – Welcome.

For current member names see <http://www.bigginhillreunited.co.uk> and go to the link to the database membership..

BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT SOCIAL CLUB LTD

Thanks to all that have renewed their club membership – do keep using those concessions at local restaurants and services – details can be found on the club site at <http://www.bigginhillclub.co.uk>

THE AIRPORT

The huge new Rizonjet hangar on the south camp site in front of the original location of the old Pilots Pals club is looking more impressive by the day. With this, the new flying clubs, and hopefully the new airport hotel once approved, none of the anti-airport brigade will be able to ever again criticise the airport for the entrance looking unkempt. This is beginning to look like a 21st Century airport rather than an old RAF wartime airfield.

ADAMS AVIATION

I have been told by several people that Adams Aviation is closing down. This is totally untrue! Adams Aviation, one of Biggin Hill's success stories, has simply outgrown their current premises and are moving to a site in nearby New Addington. So your source of all equipment, books, and all things aviation, will still be on our doorstep, and their excellent online and mail order side will still be available. (Club members remember you have a generous discount scheme available using your membership card)

See: <http://www.adamsaviation.com> and <http://www.flyingshop.com>

THE 2009 AIR FAIR

With just under 2 months to go until the weekend of the 2009 Air Fair (27th and 28th June), it is good to see that airport users and club members seem to be embracing the show this year and availing themselves of the many hospitality options available to make the day more enjoyable. In addition to the special heavily discounted private owner facilities made available by ADI, there remains the up-market "Spitfire Club" and the excellent Grandstand facilities with marquee and garden areas for the more budget conscious.

The programme for the weekend's flying is apparently coming together nicely, with the Red Arrows on both days (plus the Friday press day), and the special fly past of a Virgin Atlantic 747 with the Red Arrows scheduled for the Sunday to celebrate Virgin's 25th anniversary. With the promise of the Vulcan, if it is serviceable on the day, the show should be very special this year.

(for full details of the planned programme, news, and details of hospitality facilities and prices, go to <http://www.bigginhillairfair.co.uk>)

FAA "RESTRICTED" LICENCES

Following on from a story in an earlier newsletter regarding the need to go to the USA to have an FAA 61.75 (often referred to as a "restricted") licence validated as English Language Proficient, and converted into the newer plastic "credit card style" format. There have been several articles in the aviation press regarding this. Some still warn the official line is precisely that, while others indicate that they have done it from the UK. The answer is – if you want to maintain the FAA restricted licence – you must do it, otherwise the old paper ones are now invalid, but do your research first as it could cost you more than needed. (If anyone has any details of the definitive way of doing it in the UK, please let me know the details for inclusion in a future newsletter)

GORDON FRANKS MEMORIAL GARDEN PARTY

Plans are moving forward for the special Garden Party for friends and colleagues, and their families, on 11th July 2009, at Gordon's family home at Leighbridge Farm near Headcorn. Ian Franks has been working hard and has confirmed marquee and toilet facilities, and even a large barbecue for self cooking. This promises to be a truly family day out for all Gordon's friends, one of his final wishes.

For those that wish to stay locally to avoid the drink/drive problems, please see the list of suitable local guesthouses at www.bigginhillreunited.co.uk/b&b_addresses.pdf

I understand that a few people from the Biggin Hill area were talking about organising a coach to and from the airport – If anyone is interested in organising that, perhaps they could let me know and I will include their details in a subsequent newsletter..

More details, including full address and maps, GPS co-ordinates, lat/longs etc., to follow closer to the time and remember all Gordon's friends are very welcome. (if anyone has any queries, please feel free to email me john@bigginhillreunited.co.uk or call me – numbers on the club website at www.bigginhillclub.co.uk)

That's about it for this month...

John Willis
Biggin Hill Airport Users Database

(And Finally:

Brought to my attention by a colleague, this quite alarmed me, as I had no idea this was the case

QUOTE.....

Unwitting motorists face £1,000 fines as thousands of photo card driving licences expire

Thousands of motorists are at risk of being fined up to £1,000 because they are unwittingly driving without a valid licence. They risk prosecution after failing to spot the extremely small print on their photo card licence which says it automatically expires after 10 years and has to be renewed - even though drivers are licensed to drive until the age of 70.

The fiasco has come to light a decade after the first batch of photo licences was issued in July 1998, just as they start to expire.

Motoring organisations blamed the Government for the fiasco and said 'most' drivers believed their licences were for life. They said officials had failed to publicise sufficiently the fact that new-style licences - unlike the old paper ones - expire after a set period and have to be renewed. To rub salt into wounds, drivers will have to pay £17.50 to renew their card - a charge which critics have condemned as a 'stealth tax' and which will earn the Treasury an estimated £437million over 25 years.

Official DVLA figures reveal that while 16,136 expired this summer, so far only 11,566 drivers have renewed, leaving 4,570 outstanding. With another 300,000 photo card licences due to expire over the coming year, experts fear the number of invalid licences will soar, putting thousands more drivers in breach of the law and at risk of a fine.

At the heart of the confusion is the small print on the tiny credit- card-size photo licence, which is used in conjunction with the paper version. Just below the driver name on the front of the photo card licence is a series of dates and details - each one numbered. Number 4b features a date in tiny writing, but no explicit explanation as to what it means. The date's significance is only explained if the driver turns over the card and reads the key on the back which states that '4b' means 'licence valid to'.

Even more confusingly, an adjacent table on the rear of the card sets out how long the driver is registered to hold a licence - that is until his or her 70th birthday.

A total of 25 million new-style licences have been issued but - motoring experts say - drivers were never sufficiently warned they would expire after 10 years. Motorists who fail to renew their licences in time are allowed to continue driving, but the DVLA says they could be charged with 'failing to surrender their licence', an offence carrying a £1,000 fine.

AA president, Edmund King said: 'It is not generally known that photo card licences expire: there appears to be a lack of information that people will have to renew these licences. 'People think they have already paid them for once over and that is it. It will come as a surprise to motorists and a shock that they have to pay an extra £17.50.' The AA called on the Government to use the annual £450million from traffic enforcement fines to offset the renewal charge.

.....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 unusual and interesting stories or anecdotes that you feel may interest our readers, please email them to me as a possible inclusion in a monthly "and Finally" ...)