

Hi everyone

Welcome to the November 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!)

OCTOBER WEATHER

The October weather was quite reasonable for the first part of the month, but was then quite changeable during the latter couple of weeks, with particularly strong gusty winds at times, frequently right across the one runway we have available nowadays. But generally, it wasn't too bad. We are now moving of course towards the winter period where the weather is unlikely to be ideal for light aircraft a fair bit of the time. So, when we get acceptable conditions, we should all try to do the best to take full advantage of any acceptable training conditions.

By the time you read this Newsletter, we will of course have changed the clocks back to UTC/GMT so the days will be getting substantially shorter until we get through the Christmas and New Year period and start moving towards Spring again.

JOHN BRYAN (JB)

Many of us celebrated the life of our friend John Bryan (JB to most of us!) at his Memorial Service, which was held on Monday 10th October 2022 at the RAF St George's Chapel. The service was followed by a gathering with his family (wife Christine, and daughter Briony and her children) at the Crown Pub and Restaurant just down the hill from the airport.

Very many close friends attended both functions to show the family how truly respected JB was and how we will all miss him. We were all able to raise a glass or two to our very special friend with the family.

Rest in Peace JB – you will never be forgotten.....

MARTIN CAIN

Sadly we had to also say goodbye to yet another old friend, Flying Instructor Martin Cain who passed away in September. His funeral was held in Sutton a few days prior to JB's Memorial.

CHRIS WADHAM

We received notification that sadly another old Biggin Hill'ite, Chris Wadham, passed away on 19th October at age 86 after a short illness following a fall and hospitalisation with a broken hip.

Chris learnt to fly quite late in life at Civilair flying Cessnas - he also did some American flying touring, as well as several customary cross channel flights to Le Touquet.

Earlier in his life, he was in the RAF police as a dog handler, and then later followed a commercial sales career. Once well into his 70s he had a part time job delivering cars for a local garage. He was also a keen caravanner.

Chris is survived by his wife Pam and two grown children living in Kent

A very difficult and quite upsetting month for us all....

AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS

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

The "Landings Hotel" is now looking very much more like an hotel and is expected to be completed in mid December, although not expected to actually open until the month of January.

The Battle of Britain special garden and memorial statue, designed by John Everiss, was formally opened on Friday 30th September with a very impressive and emotional series of wartime news films and speeches by both David Winstanley and Randolph Churchill to the large group of invited airport guests and local politicians, as well as several Wartime military veterans. Included within the formal opening was a flypass from the Heritage Hangar's Spitfire and then after the opening, the guests were taken to the Lookout Café for a light lunch and drinks, followed by a full Spitfire flying display over the airport for everyone's benefit.

A very special day and a unique garden and statue which is now open to the public to view at their leisure....

The Churchill Way roadway, along with street lighting and a pavement, is now totally completed right from the airport entrance by the roundabout through to the Heritage Hangar....

The vast new Bombardier Hangar and complex is now finished, and they have moved virtually all their services there from the original facility by the South Camp entrance. (That original Bombardier hangar has now been taken over by a new company, Jetex). Bombardier has also now retained the use of the other hangar, (formerly the Surrey and Kent, plus Cobby's, and Fairflight) but then used by Jet Aviation until Bombardier took it over.

The very popular Lookout Café is open and attracting many of the local residential population as was the case pre-Covid closure, and of course many airport employees who use it for their lunches.

The airport is certainly looking good and clearly is expected to remain in service as an airport long term, but still does support General Aviation activities and training where possible....

NOVEMBER BIGGIN HILL POSTED FUEL PRICES

The “posted” Biggin Hill Airport fuel prices, excluding VAT, for the calendar month of November 2022 are:

£2:13.8 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)

£1:08 per litre for Jet A1

(or £1:53.1 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

Another month, another newsletter.

We were thrilled to host Ellie and Chris, our resident air traffic controllers, this month for a brief talk on the workings of ATC. They descended from their tower to join us at Alouette HQ to take us through both the process of becoming a controller, and the day-to-day process of stopping aeroplanes bumping into each other at Biggin Hill. I found it really interesting to note that, as pilots, we essentially think and do things in the same way as controllers, we just have a different view out the window. It was also useful for our students to find that those who work in ATC are not, in fact, four-headed ogres who like to eat the brains of low-houred PPLs, but they are human and they do occasionally make mistakes as well.

Being at the helm of a flying club with a history as long as Alouette's is in equal measure humbling and terrifying. Humbling because I feel little more than a custodian, and terrifying because, like any custodian, I want to leave it for the next person in a better condition than when I found it. But rather than being a tangible thing like a grandfather clock or a piece of ancient woodland, Alouette is more of a concept. The ideal is of a member-run social flying club with people coming and going and flights from sunrise to sunset and chats at the bar before going to sleep, smiling and exhausted, to do it all again the next day.

Alouette has been based at Biggin Hill since 1959 and I've heard all the stories; getting in early to put your name on the blackboard, sleeping under the wing of an aircraft, spending the entire day at the airfield then not being able to fly after all; I've heard about all the characters and all the tall tales of derring do and airmanship, good and bad; I've met airline captains on the other side of the world who learnt to fly at Alouette before I was even born.

For the past two years, since I inherited the role of chairman, I have been trying to cling to that ideal, that vision, that memory, and to keep a little flame from the past burning in our corner of Biggin Hill. And I have reached a sad yet unavoidable conclusion - nobody cares.

Rather like a child finding out the truth about the tooth fairy, I too feel a little silly in believing in it in the first place. I will not lament the instantaneous gratification we all desire these days, nor that the idea of burning oil and flying an aeroplane for fun these days is about as popular to today's youth as butchering a polar bear. I won't decry the fact that, even amongst those who do want to fly, very few can actually afford it, especially given the uncertain economic situation, and that for all the many benefits of flying at Biggin Hill, cost-saving is not one of them. The simple fact is, time passes.

We do get a trickle of people who, rather like those who sympathetically restore steam engines, see that alluring flicker of history in Alouette, but our flame is being starved of oxygen. The truth is that many of the big characters of the past have sadly now passed on or are at the very least long into retirement. Those who linger on are seemingly no longer interested in or able to get involved. Our next social evening, held since the days of Pluto and Aristotle on the first Wednesday of the month, will almost certainly draw in no more than four or five visitors, who will likely buy one or two soft drinks, discuss how much better things were in the past and then go home.

I and the band of merry men who are involved in the running of Alouette these days are fully committed to keeping it going, but a flame cannot burn without oxygen, and Alouette cannot continue without involvement and engagement from new blood. Without that I fear that a long-running and apparently much-loved Biggin Hill institution may soon be consigned to the pages of history, but I would really rather we could remain for another month and another newsletter.

Stuart Taylor
Chairman - Alouette Flying Club

MONTHLY NEWS FROM THE CEO'S OFFICE

The Airport continues to perform extremely well despite the fact that the economic landscape remains uncertain and the labour market remains extremely challenging. Staff recruitment and retention remains the Airport's most critical challenge. Against a backdrop of unprecedented levels of traffic, the need for continual investment in infrastructure puts pressure on the desire for prudent cost control.

The increase in business jet movements is as a result of several factors ranging from a move from scheduled to business aviation and other airports experiencing operational challenges. Notably, the Airport continues to see an increase in transatlantic traffic with a corresponding uplift in fuel revenue. Light aviation continues to mirror 2021, albeit with a slight reduction in movements, which might be a reflection that this market is more susceptible to the current economic environment. That said, the Airport has, at times, restricted PPR approvals to ensure safety and regulate demand. This more price sensitive sector may be affected by the economic challenges for some time to come.

Developments on the Airport continue to progress quickly and the Airport remains committed to keep this level of investment up to ensure we continue to improve our infrastructure. The operational transfer from Hangar 510 to Bombardiers 401 facility is now complete and Bombardier have, due to high demand, have chosen to maintain their operation in Hangar 446. The construction of the Hotel is progressing extremely well and practical completion is planned now for 22nd December. The Airport will complete operational work up trials over the Christmas break with a formal opening in January 2023. Recruitment across several areas is already underway and the Airport hopes to provide in excess of 20 full time jobs to local people. The Airport continues to engage with Mr Ecclestone regarding options for the development of West Camp. This remains an important strategic objective but will required detailed engagement with Heritage England and the LBB. The Airport has completed the road and footpath resurfacing 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.

To address the immediate high demand for onsite training facilities, the Airport is converting the old JOTA building into a multi-user training facility. This is 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 Airport remains extremely frustrated that it still awaits a decision from the CAA regarding the 03 ACP. The CAA confirmed that the Airport would receive a decision by late Q3 or early q4 this year. At the time of writing this newsletter update, the CEO awaits contact from the CAA.

Finally, the Airport wishes to express its thanks to the flying community for its continued adherence to our noise abatement procedures and for helping the Airport to remain a good neighbour.

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

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.....

A nice thank you letter.....

I want to thank you for the lovely transistor radio you and your colleagues sent me for my birthday. It is all the more wonderful that an absolute stranger like yourself remembers old folks like me. I am 97 years old and have been in this home for the last 26 years. We are treated very kindly but the lonely hours are very hard to bear.

My Room-mate Mrs James has a radio but will never let me listen to it and often switches it off when I come into the room. But now, I have one of my very own.

My grandsons and granddaughters are very nice and come to see me once a month, but I know that they only come along from a sense of duty. That is why your gift is all the more wonderful and thrilling to me as it was given out of compassion for a fellow human being. God bless you all.

Today Mrs James' radio broke down so she asked if she could listen to mine. I told her to F*** off.
.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

A little boy comes down to breakfast. Since they live on a farm, his mother asks if he had done his chores.

"Not yet." said the little boy.

His mother tells him no breakfast until he does them.

Well - he's a little teed off, so he goes to feed the chickens, and he kicks a chicken. He goes to feed the cows, and he kicks a cow. He then goes to feed the pigs, and he kicks a pig.

He goes back in for breakfast and his mother gives him a bowl of dry cereal.

"How come I don't get any eggs and bacon??? Why don't I have any milk in my cereal" ??? he asks.

"Well," his mother says, " I saw you kick a chicken, so you don't get any eggs for a week. I saw you kick the pig, so you don't get any bacon for a week either. Then I saw you kick the cow, so for a week you aren't getting any milk either".

Just then his father comes down for breakfast. He trips over and kicks the pussy cat halfway across the kitchen.

The little boy looks up at his mother with a smile, and says, "You gonna tell him, or should I"?!!

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

Stress Reliever Girl: 'When we get married, I want to share all your worries, troubles and lighten your burden.'

Boy: 'It's very kind of you, darling, but I don't have any worries or troubles.'

Girl: 'Well that's because we aren't married yet.'

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

A young man moved from his parent's home into a new apartment of his own and went to the lobby to put his name on his mailbox. While there, an attractive young lady came out of the apartment next to the mailboxes, wearing a robe.

The boy smiled at the young woman and she started a conversation with him. As they talked, her robe slipped open, and it was obvious that she had nothing else on. The poor kid broke into a sweat trying to maintain eye contact.

After a few minutes, she placed her hand on his arm and said, "Let's go to my apartment, I hear someone coming."

He followed her into her apartment; she closed the door and leaned against it, allowing her robe to fall off completely.

Now completely nude, she purred at him, "What would you say is my best feature?" Flustered and embarrassed, he finally squeaked, "It's got to be your ears."

Astounded, and a little hurt she asked, "My ears? Look at these breasts; they are full and 100% natural. I work out every day and my butt is firm and solid. Look at my skin - no blemishes anywhere, so how can you think that the best part of my body is my ears?!"

Clearing his throat, he stammered, "Outside, when you said you heard someone coming, that was me..."

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

Official Government Announcement

The UK Government today announced that it is changing its emblem from a Union Jack to a Condom, because it more accurately reflects the Government's political stance.

A condom allows for inflation, halts production, destroys the next generation, protects a bunch of pricks, and gives you a sense of security while you're actually being screwed.

Damn, it just doesn't get more accurate than that!

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

Seven-year-old Mohammad entered his classroom in Dublin on the first day of school..

"What's your name?" asked the teacher.

"Mohammad," he replied.

"You're in Ireland now." replied the teacher, "so from now on you will be known as Mick."

Mohammad returned home after school.

"How was your day, Mohammad?" his mother asked.

"My name is not Mohammad. I'm in Ireland and now my name is Mick."

"Are you ashamed of your name?" his mother asked, "Are you trying to dishonour your parents, your heritage, your religion? Shame on you!"

And his mother beat him.

Then she called his father, who beat him again.

The next day Mohammad returned to school. The teacher saw all his fresh bruises.

"What happened to you, Mick?" she asked.

"Well, shortly after becoming an Irishman, I was attacked by two f***ing Muslims!!

.....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"...)