

Hi everyone

Welcome to the December 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](http://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!)*

## **NOVEMBER WEATHER**

The November weather was far from good for light aircraft flying and flight training with almost three weeks of torrential rain, low cloud, and strong gusty wind conditions! I believe the media have been saying that most of the country had around a month and a half's normal rainfall in just a few days.

As a result of the weather, when it did become flyable flying around Kent it looked like we were over some foreign lands with much serious flooding visible as far as the eye could see. As a result too, most of the grass airfields in the south of the UK (for example, Headcorn, Redhill, Rochester, Sandown, and many others) were completely waterlogged and unusable for much of the time.

As I write this Newsletter, it does appear that things are seemingly starting to dry out a little, so hopefully many of these GA airfields will start to become useable again. Still, one major advantage of all that rain is that the reservoir's, like Bewl Water and Bough Beech and others, have now been refilled, having previously looked extremely low during the earlier heat waves.

## **THE NOISE ABATEMENT AND NSA'S**

I'm taking this opportunity to remind all those still flying light aircraft at Biggin, of the need to review and remember all the noise abatement routes and the location of the Noise Sensitive Areas (NSA's)

You should now have seen that the NSA's are now marked in the SkyDemon airport plates, and I understand also now correctly depicted in the up-to-date Pooley's Guides

So, a reminder:

On departures from runway 21, on crossing the road at the end of the runway, make a "track change" to the right of 10 degrees, and that track should be held until 2 nautical miles before turning left onto an approximately South heading until crossing the North Downs ridge where the left turn to Sevenoaks should be made before crossing the M25 (to avoid infringing on the Gatwick controlled airspace).

This will ensure that you do not infringe the Tatsfield NSA which is currently up to 2,500'. It is important to remember that you must NOT re-enter the airport's ATZ without a positive clearance to do so!

If your intention is to route to the Northeast, then it is important to remain outside the ATZ before turning left towards Swanley or the QE2 bridge, unless an overhead departure is requested and cleared.

If routing to the West, then this is normally done at 1nm, but it is important to avoid overflying Kenley at all (active glider flying) or the NSA's around Woldingham or Warlingham, which should not be overflown at less than 2,000'

On departures from 03, if routing west, the route should be to follow the normal left hand circuit routing but continuing to climb to cruising level – remembering to avoid the Woldingham and Warlingham NSA's as mentioned above, and of course avoiding overflying Kenley aerodrome.

If routing to Swanley then it is possible to climb directly on track as long as you will be in excess of 2,000' before crossing the NSA in the Farnborough/Orpington area.

If routing to the Southeast, then after take off, the climb should be continued but a left hand climbing turn towards Sevenoaks should be commenced at 1nm

So – it is important to know the locations of the NSA's and avoid them unless over 2,000' but be aware that the NSA over Tatsfield goes up to 2,500' so cannot be overflown.

Biggin Hill based pilots are actually very good at following the above routings and avoiding infringing NSA's, but periodically we find that some newer pilots or instructors do fail to follow these rules until they are given these sort of reminders...

## **BOB DENWOOD**

It is incredibly sad to report that our old friend and WWII veteran, Bod Denwood, passed away on 19<sup>th</sup> November. Bob was known to many of us old Biggin Hill'ites from the old days of the airport. Personally, as a member of Experimental Flying Group in the early 60's, I remember Bob well – and I can still hear in my head his voice “Get your bloody hair cut laddie” and “ put that fag out laddie”....

*The following has been supplied by Bob's daughter Carolynne, for which I really thank her.....*

Bob was born in April 1923 in Liverpool where he lived with his older brother and parents in poverty during the 1930's depression. The family moved to Tooting when he was 12, when his father secured a job driving lorries between Liverpool and London.

He left school at 14 having been mercilessly taunted by teachers and pupils about his Liverpudlian accent. His first job was as office clerk at Empire Dairies near London Bridge on £1 a week, from which he was later dismissed for watching the Battle of Britain dogfights from the roof of the office. Obviously his passion for aircraft and aviation started at a young age.

He and his father, who had been a military driver in WW1, joined the Home Guard within 10 minutes of war being declared. He told stories of 'Dad's Army' style escapades armed with a bayonet tied to a piece of old pipe. As soon as he was old enough, he signed up for the RAF in 1942, joining Coastal Command on B-17's with 547 and 224 Squadron. He spent a large part of the war in training as a Wireless Op/Air Gunner in Cornwall, Wales and Scotland.

Bob had at least 4 close encounters with an early demise.

The first was as war ended in May 1945 when his squadron was tasked with shepherding U-Boats to British ports. On landing after one such tour in a B24 with a full load of depth charges, the left landing gear collapsed and the plane sped along the runway in a shower of sparks, luckily coming to a halt without catching fire. He might have ended up as 'toast'.

Bob had another lucky break when after four and a half years in the RAF, he tossed a coin to decide after whether to leave or stay in. The coin told him to leave. The crew he would have joined, crashed shortly afterwards and he would have perished.

His third brush with death is described later.

After leaving the RAF he joined his Father who had opened a second hand furniture shop in Camberwell.

On 9<sup>th</sup> April 1949 he married Betty, whom he had met when they were both 11 in Wigton Cumbria, Betty's home town, and in 1953 they had a daughter, Carolynne.

Bob eventually took over his Father's business selling new rather than second hand furniture.

By 1962, he could finally afford to indulge his passion and study for his private pilot's licence with Rex Nichols at the Experimental Flying Group, Biggin Hill.

Having met and befriended commercial pilot Don Bullock at Biggin, he accompanied him on many aircraft ferry trips and had some fantastic adventures. For example.....

1972: Flew to Japan in an Islander visiting 9 different countries in 5 days.

1974: Co-piloted a B24 Liberator bomber on an 850 mile flight across the Atlantic from Prestwick to Iceland.

1975: Involved as interpreter in the procurement of the B17 "Sally B" from the French government and flew with the crew at countless air shows in the UK.

1976: Helped fly 5 DC3's from Entebbe in Idi Amin's Uganda to Israel via Egypt.

Bob's third near miss was at the Biggin Hill Air Show on 20 September 1980 where he was due to fly in the display with Don Bullock in an A26 Invader. Just before take-off, Bob gave up his seat for a couple of young lads to fly in his place. During the display it crashed killing Don and the 5 passengers. Bob was devastated.

In 1978 he was approached by the infamous John Hawke, who provided aircraft and aviation expertise for film producers, to assist him with film work. Bob quickly became quasi office manager for John taking care of admin and providing expert advice to the film crew. He was involved in filming "Hanover Street" with Harrison Ford and also acted as second pilot in a B24 Mitchell. He also worked on John Schlessinger's "Yanks" and "Gunbus/Sky Bandits". Unfortunately his film career ended when Hawke's plane mysteriously disappeared in the Adriatic in 1992.

His fourth near miss was in 1999 when he was diagnosed with advanced stage Bowel Cancer requiring urgent surgery, which thankfully saved his life just in time.

Unfortunately Bob's beloved wife Betty developed dementia and died in 2010 and many of his contemporaries had already passed away, but he had many life-long friends with whom he spent much of his time chatting on the phone and reminiscing about old times, exciting adventures and an extensive collection of aviation photographs and books.

He had an active interest in so many areas and had an encyclopaedic knowledge of nature, history, heraldry, to name a few. Even in his last days he was able to remember and recall details and facts learned over his lifetime. He will be sorely missed by his daughter Carolynne, her husband Brian and their two sons Graham and Simon as well as many friends and other relatives.

Bob's name has been entered in Biggin Hill Reunited's Roll of Honour at [www.bigginhillreunited.co.uk](http://www.bigginhillreunited.co.uk)

Rest in Peace Bob, my old friend – you will never be forgotten.....

PS. The family will be having a private funeral, but they hope to be able to arrange a memorial event early in the new year at the RAF chapel, Biggin Hill.

## **PHIL JOHNSON**

Sadly we received news that another old Biggin Hill'ite, Phil Johnson, passed away on 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

Phil was known to many of us airport oldies as the owner of Wolfe Garage in Westerham, and as a close friend and business associate of our own Jock Maitland and Roy Taylor. They not only were involved in the introduction of the Biggin Hill International Air Travel Fair, but also jointly ran Airport Hire, a motor caravan rental business from the airport.

He was born on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1930 in Eltham and attended 9 different schools as they all kept getting bombed out! The family then moved to Crockham Hill when he was not quite eleven years old, and he went to Hosey School in Westerham.

As a schoolboy, his interest in things mechanical could be his downfall. He was actually riding his new Christmas bike home from school when a German plane flew by overhead. He looked up to see it and promptly rode into a lamp post, ending up in hospital with stitches above his right eye!

Along with his mates at school, he was fascinated by the war and aeroplanes and subsequently joined the RAF.

In later years with his involvement with Biggin Hill airport, which he really loved, as we said he helped in many ways on the Airshows, and was very much part of the installation of the 'Gate Guardian' Spitfire and Hurricane outside the Chapel and museum.

He was also a member of the Alouette Flying Club and loved his involvement with aeroplanes. He joined a consortium in the running of a light plane and flew himself to Germany to pick up car parts from the VW factory! He also took part in the 1972 International Air Race.

For his 60<sup>th</sup> Jean organized a surprise flight in a Spitfire, that ever-present grin was the widest it could be!

A great family man, Phil was a founder member of Westerham Rotary Club and the Christmas Tree on the Green was always a collaborative effort between the Garage and the Rotary.

His grand design for the bungalow where he lived for the last two years with his now late wife Jean, but their time there was not to be. He never got over losing Jean and is undoubtedly back together with her again.

His name has been added to the Biggin Hill Reunited Roll of Honour at [www.bigginhillreunited.co.uk](http://www.bigginhillreunited.co.uk)

Rest in Peace Phil, you will always be remembered by your airport friends and colleagues.

### **MICHAEL (TAFF) TANNER**

In early November this year we received notification that on the 9<sup>th</sup> October, at age 70, our friend Michael (Taff) Tanner sadly passed away after a short illness.

Taff joined the Biggin Hill Airport Fire Service in January 1996, and remained in the service until April 2017. He was a very much respected Watch Manager who all his colleagues and airport friends looked up to. Even after leaving the job, Taff would have regular Wednesday night video calls with the past and present firefighters.

At the many Biggin Hill Air Fairs, Taff and his wife and their four children, Melanie, Michael, Haydn, and Selina, and their respective families, would often join all of us airport workers and our friends and families at Joe's "Pilots Pals" bar after the day's show.

Taff's funeral, which was attended by his family and literally hundreds of friends and former work colleagues on Friday 11th November, virtually brought his village of Welwyn to a complete standstill as Taff made his final journey.

His name has been added to the Roll of Honour on our website at [www.bigginhillreunited.co.uk](http://www.bigginhillreunited.co.uk)

Rest in Peace Taff, you will never be forgotten by us all....

## AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS

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

The long awaited "Landings Hotel" is now looking very close to being completed, and is apparently due for completion in early January, with an official opening expected later the same month.

The amazing and most impressive Battle of Britain memorial statue and garden at the South Camp entrance by the roundabout is now looking very stunning, and a perfect display to be viewable by the public and also as a spectacular feature in front of the new hotel entrance lobby.

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

In the last few days prior to the publication of this Newsletter, the building of a new taxiway joining the Foxtrot taxiway, the old runway 11/29 (adjacent to junction "Alpha 4"), and the actual Alpha taxiway (close to the "Charlie" runup area) commenced. The purpose of the new taxiway is to enable the airport's much larger corporate jets to taxi safely rather than using the current much narrower Alpha taxiway, which is rather close to the Heritage Hangar ramp and the Alouette parking bays.

The vast new Bombardier Hangar and complex is now finished and operational, having vacated 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, originally used by Jet Aviation until Bombardier took it over.

The excellent Lookout Café continues to be well supported by local residents and airport staff alike.

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....

## CROYDON AIRPORT AVIATION COLLECTORS FAIR

With Christmas and the New Year just around the corner, this is just a quick reminder about the annual Croydon Airport Aviation (Military, Aviation, and Model) Collectors Fair, which is again open on Sunday the 8<sup>th</sup> January 2023, starting at 10.30am, at the former Croydon Airport Hotel, (next door to Airport House), and which is now actually known as the Hallmark Hotel, Purley Way, Croydon Surrey CR9 4LT

Entry fee for adults is £4, but children under age 10 are free.

There is free car parking available too.

## DECEMBER BIGGIN HILL POSTED FUEL PRICES

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

£2:01 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)

£1:04.7 per litre for Jet A1 (or £1:55.5 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 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](mailto:john@bigginhillreunited.co.uk) )

### **ALOUETTE FLYING CLUB**

Rain, sun, rain again and then darkness. I forget every year how quickly the light fades in winter. Flying by its very nature is seasonal and so with limited windows to get airborne for the next few months, how can we maintain some form of currency?

I was grounded four months ago for medical reasons, which might lie at the root of my existential "what is the meaning of it all?" vibe last month, but having just started to return to the air I have been amazed with how quickly the rust accumulates. What surprised me more was where that rust forms - the areas of my flying that suffered.

The 'check A' is ingrained deeply in me but I took my time and triple checked myself. An untrained monkey could start a single engine piston aeroplane and, being a good boy, I was doing it all from the checklist anyway. The radio work I thought would be a struggle but no, I still remembered how to talk, but could I remember how to tune and identify nav aids? It was like I'd never seen the NAV/COM setup before. Admittedly I was with an instructor and it was a gorgeous clear day but still, I felt affronted by my inability to remember how to do something I have done countless times before.

You can imagine my relief then when I found that the actual feel of flying an aeroplane hadn't gone anywhere. I could still fly straight and level (often mistaken for being an easy task!) and that sense of oneness, of almost wearing the aircraft came straight back to me. And with it came the realisation that flying is just something I cannot live without. Call it love or obsession, call it the world's most expensive addiction, call it what you will, but once it takes a hold of you it never leaves.

My steep turns weren't much to write home about and my landing probably wouldn't have achieved a round of applause were I in an Irish 737, but the feel was there. I was reaching a point where I was starting to take aviating for granted. It wasn't until it was taken away from me that I realised just how privileged I am to be able to do it.

Needless to say I have been chair-flying ever since while I await the return of my medical proper. But if you need to dust off the cobwebs and get back to the great blue above then why not start by coming to the next Alouette social on Wednesday 7th December, kick off around 1930 in the Alouette clubhouse.

Until next month, happy flying

Stuart Taylor  
Chairman - Alouette Flying Club

### **MONTHLY NEWS FROM THE CEO'S OFFICE**

The Airport continues to perform well despite the current economic environment and the fact that recruitment within a strained labour market remains extremely challenging. That said, the Airport has seen noticeable success in specific areas of recruitment, especially regarding the Hotel and FBO areas and this bodes well for next year. The Airport continues to balance the need for prudent cost control against the need for continual capital investment.

Whilst movement levels have tailed off towards the end of November, the Airport is still out performing the same period in 2019, which was the Airport's most successful year to date. Market analysis suggest



that the rate of growth experienced in the later part of 2021 and the early part of 2022 will slow but growth in 2023 will mirror that experienced in 2019. 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.

As I complete this newsletter, The formal opening of the Bombardier facility will take place in the next few hours. The ceremony will make the culmination of several years of hard work to secure the continuing partnership between London Biggin Hill and Bombardier. This facility provides a visible footprint of the Airport's evolving eco system of complementary aviation business and provides proof of the Airport's ability to act as a catalyst for inward investment and job creation.

The construction of the Hotel is progressing extremely well and practical completion is planned now for early 2023 with a formal opening shortly thereafter. Recruitment across several areas is already underway and the Airport hopes to provide in excess of 20 full time jobs to local people with many more roles available on a casual basis.

The Airport continues to engage with Mr Ecclestone regarding options for the development of West Camp.

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.

The Airport has commenced works to resurface taxiway Alpha and has started the grounds works for the new taxiway Bravo.

The work to change the old JOTA building into a multi user training facility is progressing at pace. This short-term solution to address the more strategic need for an Aviation Training College is already attracting significant interest and the intention is that Airport based and external training providers will be able to hire the facility.

Disappointingly, I have no new information regarding the 03 RNAV approach and the Airport remains extremely frustrated that it still awaits a decision from the CAA. The CAA confirmed that the Airport would receive a decision by late Q3 or early Q4 this year.

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.

Thank you  
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](http://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](mailto: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.

And all that remains is for me to wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a very Happy and hopefully prosperous New Year

That's it for this month. Enjoy your flying - Please stay well and stay safe.....

Best wishes  
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](mailto:john@bigginhillreunited.co.uk)

QUOTE.....

An Airbus 380 is on its way across the Atlantic. It flies consistently at 800 km/h at 30,000 feet, when suddenly a Eurofighter with a Tempo Mach 2 appears.

The pilot of the fighter jet slows down, flies alongside the Airbus and greets the pilot of the passenger plane by radio: "Airbus, boring flight isn't it? Now have a look here!"

He rolls his jet on its back, accelerates, breaks through the sound barrier, rises rapidly to a dizzying height, and then swoops down almost to sea level in a breathtaking dive. He loops back next to the Airbus and asks: "Well, how was that?"

The Airbus pilot answers: "Very impressive, but watch this!"

The jet pilot watches the Airbus, but nothing happens. It continues to fly straight, at the same speed. After 15 minutes, the Airbus pilot radios, "Well, how was that?"

Confused, the jet pilot asks, "What did you do?"

The AirBus pilot laughs and says: "I got up, stretched my legs, walked to the back of the aircraft to use the washroom, then got a cup of coffee and a chocolate fudge pastry."

The moral of the story is: When you're young, speed and adrenaline seems to be great. But as you get older and wiser, you learn that comfort and peace are more important.

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

A prostitute goes to the doctors, she's pregnant.

Doc says, "Do you know who the father is?"

The prostitute says, "if I gave you a tin of beans.... would you know which one made you fart?"

.....UNQUOTE



QUOTE.....

A recently widowed Jewish lady was sitting on a beach towel at Cocoa Beach, Florida. She looked up and noticed that a man her age had walked up, placed his blanket on the sand nearby and began reading a book.

Smiling, she attempted to strike up a conversation with him. 'Hello, sir, how are you?'

'Fine, thank you,' he responded, and turned back to his book.

'I love the beach. Do you come here often?' she asked.

'First time since my wife passed away last year,' he replied, and again turned back to his book.

'Do you live around here?' she asked.

'Yes, I live over in Suntree,' he answered, and then resumed reading.

Trying to find a topic of common interest, Sarah persisted. 'Do you like pussycats?'

With that, the man threw his book down, jumped off his blanket onto hers, tore off both their swimsuits and gave her the most passionate ride of her life!

As the cloud of sand began to settle, Sarah gasped and asked the man, 'How did you know that was what I wanted?'

The man replied, 'How did you know my name was Katz?'

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

3 men pass away on Christmas Eve and go to heaven. St Peter says you have to have something Christmasy to get in.

The Englishman flicks his lighter and says that's a candle and goes in.

The Welshman shakes his keys and says they are sleigh bells and goes in.

The Irishman pulls out a thong and bra set.

St Peter says, "what the bloody hell have they got to do with Christmas?"

The Irishman says, "they're Carols "

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

I was busy stacking boxes of washing powder in the supermarket I work at when my new girlfriend walked in.

"You lying bastard", she screamed, "You said you were a stunt pilot!!!"

"No I didn't", I retorted, "I said I was part of an aerial display team!!!"

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

I overheard a couple of guinea pigs having a chat.

The first said, "are you going to have the CV19 vaccine?"

"Not on your life I'm not", said the second, "Well, not until human trials have been completed."

.....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"...) )