

Hi everyone

Welcome to the February 2025 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.

As usual, 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 so you can find and draw it down for yourself!)

JANUARY WEATHER

January weather has been pretty awful. Most days sufficiently marginal to prevent most GA and Flight Training flights happening almost for the whole month. Fortunately, with only a couple of very severe days, at least Biggin Hill was able to be used by a realistic number of corporate and public transport aircraft operations.

So, even at the time of me writing this newsletter for publication at the end of January, I was watching the awful weather, at least from the comfort of my own home in the valley just below the airport...

Let us all hope that the weather may possibly improve at some point soon before we all forget how to fly!! For all private owners of light aircraft, and of course for the clubs and schools, a significant amount of better weather is being prayed for before we all forget how to do it.....

R. A. SIMON AMES OBE

Sadly just before publishing this month's Newsletter, we were notified of Simon Ames, the airport's friend and former Airshow assistant organiser, passing earlier this month. The following was provided for me by Colin Hitchins, for which I appreciate:

Biggin Hill Airport has a long history that has stories of many characters, but only a few have helped mould that history, one such individual is Simon Ames OBE who sadly passed away early this month. Simon touched many areas of this country's rich aviation history far too much for me to give justice to here. Simon was an Eaton educated, Fleet Air Arm fast jet pilot whose passion led him to promoting aviation as a media and communications executive with the likes of British Caledonian, Brooklands Museum and Biggin Hill Airport a career that spanned over 65 years.

In 1963, Jock Maitland MBE, founder of the Biggin Hill Air Fair, asked the then Secretary of the Royal Aero Club to organise a flying display for the next year, so began Simon's relationship with Biggin Hill. Simon was the display director for the next 47 years, helping inspire many generations to become part of his passion, aviation.

What is not so publicly known is the support that Simon gave to the Chairman of BHAL, Andrew Walters since 1994, using his media and communication skills to promote the many

benefits that Biggin brings to the local and wider community. Simon never retired, despite declining health he carried on, turning his attention to recording the stories of the many veterans associated with aviation and Biggin Hill, ensuring their stories are there for future generations. Simon was a unique individual, that anyone who met him admired, he had an ability to engage with all, young and old from all aspects of our community.

Our condolences to his wife Sally and our thanks for having known a key figure in the history of this wonderful airfield. Blue Skies Simon.

Thank you - Colin....

R.I.P. Simon, all your friends and colleagues at Biggin Hill will miss you after all the efforts you have carried out for the Airshows at Biggin Hill, and your serious involvement over the years running the Royal Aero Club as the *Secretary General, and as the CEO of AOPA UK*.

STEPHEN MOLES

Steve passed away peacefully on the 18th of January 2025. He had a lifelong love of flying, Classic Cars and Honda motorcycles, which he had a collection of over 25.

He was a Telecoms Engineer for the GPO.

He learnt to fly at the Guernsey Aero Club and continued his private flying at Biggin Hill, where he went on to train for his Flying Instructors rating. He was instructing at the Civil Service Flying Club and EFG, later becoming an examiner.

He set up a company at Biggin Hill offering Ad Hoc Charters and flight instruction, before moving down to Headcorn to form Skyways Aviation, where he offered flight instruction and pleasure flights.

He subsequently worked at Gatwick for a while for a British Airways franchise, which eventually went out of business. So, he then decided to work in Vietnam for Vietnam Airlines, where he became a pilot on their ATR72 fleet, as well as a TRE & IRE, which he did for several years. Whilst he was there, he met and married his wife, Giaou, and they had a daughter, Jasmine.

After the series of several COVID periods, he left Vietnam and returned to the UK, and he ended his airline flying career.

He settled down at his home near Hastings, where he then took up a job as a driving instructor, which he was already qualified for.

R.I.P. Stephen, your friends and colleagues who knew you back in the Biggin Hill and Headcorn days, will undoubtedly miss you....

PATRICIA (TRISH) ELSON

Biggin Hill lost a wonderful person who spent many many years at Biggin Hill. Patricia Elson, always known by us all as Trish, sadly passed away on 25th January, after being quite poorly for several years, and was in a Beckenham Care Home.

Trish was born in 1941 and after leaving school, worked for a number of places in Bromley, before starting to work at Biggin Hill Airport with various companies, the first of which was Express Aviation as Radio man Ray Notman's secretary in the late 70's, before moving to Shipping and Airlines in the mid 80's.

She did work in Sevenoaks for a while in the Council housing association until it closed and she then returned to working for Shipping and Airlines again until around 2010, before retiring fully.

Until around 5 years ago, she lived with her sister, Sheila, in Biggin Hill, which is why so many of us knew her very well.

A lovely lady, Trish, R.I.P. – you will be missed by many of your old airport friends

BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT

As is very clear from the comments above in the first paragraph about the weather, it's not difficult to accept that weather at this time of the year is seldom very flyable. Still, it should improve eventually.

The airport is very organised now and is ensuring that the Corporate and Commercial aircraft have an excellent airport for them to use that is close to the centre of our capital city.

They are planning major improvements this year which we have been advised of:

For the introduction (after sufficient calibration and legal assessment) of an instrument approach for runway 03, which should really help to reduce the large jets having to fly down the ILS for runway 21, and then circling relatively low to make the approach for runway 03, which does obviously upset lots of local residents on the north side of the main runway who are concerned about the noise of such low flying aircraft.

In addition to the above improvement, Biggin Hill Airport is getting ready to fully resurface runway 21/03 in a month or so. This work is planned to be carried out overnight on several relatively small chunks of the runway with it being reopened each day, before repeating it the next night, until the whole runway has been resurfaced. In addition, it is intended that the runway will have centreline lighting installed. A very major job, which is very important for Biggin Hill to maintain its suitability as a London based airport for non-scheduled Corporate and Commercial traffic.

And finally, for those pilots operating at Biggin Hill, it is important that you are fully aware of the airport's published document that details the Noise Sensitive Areas, and the VFR Noise Abatement Procedures, Noise Abatement Departure Procedures, and the Visual Circuit and Joining Procedures to be followed. I realise that everyone who flies here will normally be aware of these procedures, but just in case, if there are any doubts at all, it would make sense to view, and probably store, the following Airport published internet link.....

<https://www.bigginbooking.com/articles/docs/nap.pdf>

Our Airport's CEO, David Winstanley, will include his regular monthly section, which is present towards the end of this newsletter, in order to keep us fully up to date with any airport plans that may affect us.....

FEBRUARY BIGGIN HILL POSTED FUEL PRICES

The “posted” Biggin Hill Airport fuel prices, excluding VAT and the Jet A1 price also excludes the Sustainable Aviation Fuel Levy, for the calendar month of February 2025 are:

£1:74.9 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 – and an additional 1p per litre off if also paid by Direct Debit)

£0:87.7 per litre for Jet A1

(As you should already be aware, from 1 January 2025, the government has mandated that all JetA1 fuel be sold with a 2% blend of Sustainable Aviation Fuel. This mandate, which is applicable to all UK airports, is intended to secure and grow UK SAF demand, support the growth of the SAF industry and reduce greenhouse gas emissions of aviation fuels in the UK.

Due to the additional cost of introducing more expensive SAF into JetA1 fuel as dictated by this compulsory government initiative, we will be introducing a SAF levy on JetA1 sales from 1 January 2025. To aid clarity and transparency, we intend for this to be displayed as a separate line on your invoices. Thank you for your understanding.)

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).

MONTHLY NEWS FROM THE CEO'S OFFICE

The Airport has enjoyed a positive start to 2025 and continues to build on the successes of 2024.

Despite a good start to the month, challenging weather conditions saw movements fall slightly short of the year prior, but there was a good increase on first time visits from aircraft compared to the month prior.

So far this year, overall business jet activity into London is –0.5% compared to December 2024, with North America traffic seeing the best increase of the regions by +12%.

Notwithstanding the continuing and growing global instability, business aviation appears to be riding out the storm and the sector continues to demonstrate its resilience.

Significant investment in improved infrastructure continues and 2025 has seen the start of many projects, including the runway resurfacing, Bombardier's state-of-the-art paint facility, the introduction of the new Instrument Runway Visual Range (IRVR) system and 24-hour automated METAR reporting. To keep fully up to date on these projects, please keep an eye on our social media channels: [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#).

We recently celebrated ten years of our London Heli Shuttle service. Operated by Castle Air, our exclusive service offers the quickest and most effective transfer time from any London airport, propelling customers into the heart of the Capital in just six minutes.

This significant milestone builds on recent innovations, including the introduction of the use of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) last year.

The Airport remains committed to achieving carbon neutral status by 2029 and, as part of this journey, we recently achieved our Carbon Reduction Level 2 Accreditation with the Airport Carbon Accreditation. We are also in the process of establishing an Environmental Committee, who will contribute towards our wider environmental action and carbon management plans.

Our on-site training and events centre, The Hub, continues to be utilised by local businesses and organisations. The space offers several rooms that can be tailored to suit any purpose, including meetings, events, team building and training courses. [Take a virtual tour of the facility here.](#)

Earlier this month, we were delighted to host the Bromley Buzz all-sector networking event at The Hub. Held monthly at locations across the borough, these fantastic events provide a platform for local businesses to connect and share insights with one another. At this 'Buzz Up', we heard from GLA Member and Bromley Councillor Thomas Turrell on green space, London Borough of Bromley's Daniel Murray on encouraging business growth in the borough, plus exciting goings on at Churchill Theatre Bromley and fascinating insights into Chelsfield Village Fair and Penge Men in Sheds. We are always pleased to take part in local networking events to share more about how the airport facilitates the creation of jobs, opportunities and economic growth.

And finally, the Airport was delighted to announce the [arrival of its first dedicated air ambulance to be based here](#). Operated by SkyCare Repatriation, a leader in medical repatriation services across Europe and beyond, the advanced Pilatus PC-12 NGX air ambulance will provide critical care transport, connecting patients with the care they need wherever they are.

Kind regards
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 to: john@bigginhillreunited.co.uk)

DATABASE EMAIL ADDRESSES

A constantly updated full list of database members is always viewable online on the main website at: www.bigginhillreunited.co.uk

Please remember to let me know if your email address is changed. Also, 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 again for this month. Do enjoy your flying (if we ever have some decent weather!) - Please do all stay well and stay safe.....

John Willis
Biggin Hill Airport Users Database

And Finally: As usual, here follows 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!).....

I would like to thank everyone who occasionally does send their help for this section. To avoid me running out of jokes (which keeps happening), please keep them coming regularly by email to: john@bigginhillreunited.co.uk

QUOTE.....

An organization is like a tree full of monkeys, all on different limbs at different levels.

The monkeys on top look down and see a tree full of smiling faces.

The monkeys on the bottom look up and see nothing but assholes.
.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

A worldwide survey was conducted by the UN. The only question asked was: "Would you please give your honest opinion about solutions to the food shortage in the rest of the world?"

The survey was a huge failure.

In Africa they didn't know what "food" meant.

In Eastern Europe they didn't know what "honest" meant.

In Western Europe they didn't know what "shortage" meant.

In China they didn't know what "opinion" meant.

In the Middle East they didn't know what "solution" meant.

In South America they didn't know what "please" meant.

And in the USA they didn't know what "the rest of the world" meant.
.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

People used to use urine to tan animal skins, so families used to all pee in a pot & then once a day it was taken & Sold to the tannery.....if you had to do this to survive you were "Piss Poor"

But worse than that were the really poor folk who couldn't even afford to buy a pot.....they "didn't have a pot to piss in" & were the lowest of the low

The next time you are washing your hands and complain because the water temperature isn't just how you like it, think about how things used to be.

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

Here are some facts about the 1500's:

Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May, and they still smelled pretty good by June.. However, since they were starting to smell Brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odor. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting Married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children. Last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it.. Hence the saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the Bath water!"

Houses had thatched roofs-thick straw-piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof... Hence the saying "It's raining cats and dogs."

There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house. This posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs and other droppings could mess up your nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection. That's how canopy beds came into existence.

The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt. Hence the saying, "Dirt poor." The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on, they added more thresh until, when you opened the door, it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entrance-way. Hence: a thresh hold.

In those old days, they cooked in the kitchen with a big kettle that always hung over the fire.. Every day they lit the fire and added things to the pot. They ate mostly vegetables and did not get much meat. They would eat the stew for dinner, leaving leftovers in the pot to get cold overnight and then start over the next day. Sometimes stew had food in it that had been there for quite a while. Hence the rhyme: Peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold, peas porridge in the pot nine days old. Sometimes they could obtain pork, which made them feel quite special. When visitors came over, they would hang up their bacon to show off. It was a sign of wealth that a man could, "bring home the bacon." They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around and chew the fat.

Those with money had plates made of pewter. Food with high acid content caused some of the lead to leach onto the food, causing lead poisoning death. This happened most often with tomatoes, so for the next 400 years or so, tomatoes were considered poisonous.

Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or the upper crust.

Lead cups were used to drink ale or whisky. The combination would Sometimes knock the imbibers out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial.. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up. Hence the custom of holding a wake.

England is old and small and the local folks started running out of places to bury people. So they would dig up coffins and would take the bones to a bone-house, and reuse the grave. When reopening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realized they had been burying people alive... So they would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, lead it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (the graveyard shift.) to listen for the bell; thus, someone could be, saved by the bell or was considered a dead ringer.

And that's the truth....Now, whoever said History was boring?
.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

A doctor and his wife were having a big argument over breakfast one morning.

As things got heated, the doctor shouted at his wife, "You aren't so good in bed either!" and then he stormed out of the room and went to work.

A couple of hours later he was feeling guilty about what he'd said so he decided to call his wife to apologize.

There was a long delay before she finally answered. "What took you so long to answer?" asked the doctor.

"I was in bed," replied his wife.

"What were you doing in bed at this time?" he asked.

"Getting a second opinion."

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

One day, a little boy and a little girl are fighting about the differences between the sexes, and which one is better.

After much arguing to and fro, the boy drops his pants and says, "Here's something I have that you'll never have."

The little girl is annoyed and upset by this, as what the boy says is obviously true. So she runs home to her Mom, crying.

A short time later, she comes running back with a smile on her face. She goes to the boy, drops her pants and says, "My Mommy says that with one of these, I can have as many of those as I want!"

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

They had shared everything, talked about everything, and had never hidden anything from each other, except for a small shoebox that the old lady kept on top of the closet.

She had always told her husband never to open it or ask about it.

All these years, the man had never thought about that box, but one day his beloved became very ill and the doctor said she would not survive. While trying to put their affairs in order, the man took the box and brought it to his wife's bedside. She agreed that it was time for him to discover its contents.

When he opened the box, he found two handmade woollen dolls and a pile of money totalling \$95,000. Surprised, he asked his wife about it.

"When we were getting married," she said, "my grandmother taught me the secret of a happy marriage: never argue. She told me that if I ever got angry with you, I should keep quiet and make a woollen doll."

The man was so moved that he could barely keep from crying. There were only two dolls in the box. That meant she had only gotten angry with him twice in all their years of living and loving together. He was over the moon.

"Honey," he said, "that explains the dolls, but what about all this money? Where did it come from?"

"Oh," she said, "that's the money I earned selling the dolls."

.....UNQUOTE

QUOTE.....

How do you make your wife scream while making love?
Call her and tell her about it.

I've just started a sexual relationship with a blind woman.
It's very rewarding, but quite challenging.
It took me ages to get her husband's voice right.

.....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" ...)