



AirportWatch bulletin 83
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AEF report finds UK's out-of-date aircraft noise policies putting the health of over one million people at risk

A new report by the AEF has identified that the Government's aircraft noise policies are risking the health of over one million people and an urgent policy rethink is needed ahead of runway decisions in 2016.

Aircraft noise is associated with increased risk of increased blood pressure, and higher risk of heart attack, heart disease and stroke. Health is also detrimentally affected through sleep disturbance and annoyance. Aircraft noise impedes the memory and learning ability of school children.

The UK's aircraft noise policy has not been updated in line with this mounting evidence base, with some noise policies based on studies dating back to the early 1980s. The Government's lack of response to emerging evidence on noise may be costing the UK £540 million each year. The noise problem is particularly acute at Heathrow, including many affected schools, but there are serious problems at Gatwick and many other airports too.

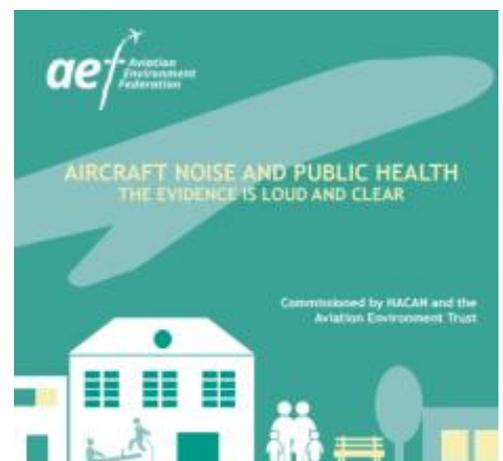
The health burden is not just experienced close to airports, with high levels of noise miles from the runway. The current policy on flight paths does not consider the impact of sudden changes, or the health impacts of newly affected communities.

The report calls for the Government to act now to reduce the health burden from aircraft noise. Long-term noise targets are needed to protect health, and all noise policies should be reviewed in the light of these targets. The **summary of the report** can be seen at <http://tinyurl.com/health-report-summary>
The **full report** (58 pages) can be seen at <http://tinyurl.com/health-report-full> 12.1.2016

A **new runway** should only be permitted if the noise burdens are reduced. The report states:

“The Government needs to clearly demonstrate that it has a plan to ensure that a new runway would be compatible with health-based noise targets before proceeding. In addition, a full health impact assessment should be carried out to make it clear what the health burden of a new runway would be, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups.”

Details <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=29229>



Long awaited Government statement on runways – decision will be delayed till summer 2016 – more work needed

On 11th December, a statement was finally put out by Patrick McLoughlin, the Secretary of State for Transport, to say that the government confirms it supports the building of a new runway in the south east, to add capacity by 2030 (earlier airports claimed they could have a runway built by 2025). The decision on location is "subject to further consideration on environmental impacts and the best possible mitigation measures." All three short listed schemes will continue to be considered - so Gatwick is still included. Mr McLoughlin said: "The government will undertake a package of further work and we anticipate that it will conclude over the summer." So that probably means up to July – or perhaps even September. That leaves thousands of people personally affected by a new runway in limbo, for yet more time.



On air pollution and carbon emissions "The government faces a complex and challenging decision on delivering this capacity." More work is needed on NO2. "The government expects the airports to put forward ambitious solutions. ...

The mechanism for delivering a runway would be consent through a Development Consent Order (DCO - a fast means of getting permission for infrastructure developments of national significance) under the Planning Act 2008 rather than a hybrid bill. The government would publish an Airports National Policy Statement (NPS) as the 'mechanism' for delivering the DCO.

Mr McLoughlin made a minimal statement in Parliament on 15th December, giving only vague responses to any questions from MPs. Many organisations made responses to the announcement of the delay. Some can be seen here. <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=28954>

Comment by AEF on government runway statement: continued support for a new runway premature without environmental safeguards

Commenting on the government announcement that the government confirms its support for building a new runway, but it will be delayed, the Aviation Environment Federation said a decision in support of expansion is premature without knowing whether important environmental questions can be answered.

"Heathrow is one of the biggest sources of CO2 emissions in the UK and people living around the airport are already subject to aircraft noise and pollution levels that impair their health. Yet the Airports Commission failed to show, in two years of work, how a new runway could be compatible with key Government commitments on air pollution and climate change."

AEF said with key environmental challenges remaining, the Government should not commit to a new runway unless and until environmental questions relating to noise, air quality and climate can be answered. "The challenges of addressing the environmental impacts of a new runway at either Heathrow or Gatwick are no less significant than they were when the Coalition Government ruled out expansion for environmental reasons in 2010. The current Government should do the same." 10.12.2015
Details <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=28935>

Prof David Metz: "The solution to London's airport capacity crisis? Do nothing"

David Metz is an Honorary professor of transport studies at UCL. He has written a sensible assessment of what should be done with the alleged "crisis" of London's airport capacity. He says for "road travel, "predict and provide" has been largely abandoned by developed economies. These days the favoured approach is called "managing demand". This method works on the basis that attempting to meet an ever-growing demand is impractical..."

David Metz asks: "What would happen if we didn't build another runway at all? For air travel, the answer lies within the market. Three-quarters of passengers are on leisure trips..." "The case for more airport capacity to support inbound tourism is weak. While London's hospitality, entertainment and retail sectors would welcome more visitors, Britain has a negative balance of trade in tourism: that is, British people abroad spend a lot more each year than overseas visitors to the UK."...

"If we decided not to build a further runway at Heathrow, the market would respond to this capacity constraint by accommodating the most valuable passengers through price increases..." "The growth of business travel would displace leisure travel, both within aircraft on existing routes and between routes, where time is traded against money."...

"Managing the demand for air travel through market mechanisms is a viable alternative to building more airport capacity" 12.12.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=29011>

Estimated 20,000 protesters from across France demonstrate massive opposition to proposed Nantes airport

Organisers of the massive peaceful protest on the 9th January, against the proposed new Nantes airport at Notre-Dame-des-Landes estimated there were 20,000 people at the demonstration. The aim was to show the massive opposition there is to the airport, and especially to the forced eviction of the 11 families and 4 farmers from land on the planned construction site.



At the protest, traffic was halted on the Nantes ring road, using dozens of tractors and blocking access to the city's airport, Nantes Atlantique. Protesters say that the €580 million project is not necessary, will be detrimental to the environment and is a wasteful use of government funds. The battle against this development has been going on for 15 years, and has become a focal issue across France, against unnecessary high carbon projects that damage the environment or uproot people. There are over 100 support committees in places across France.

The airport would require the loss of valuable marshy habitat, home to important wildlife, and good agricultural land. Some agricultural organizations threatened to maintain an indefinite blockade of one of the main Loire crossings, the Cheviré Bridge. Clashes between protesters and the authorities in 2012 resulted in a temporary halt to construction. The major protest in February 2014 led to clashes with police.

There was a legal hearing in Nantes about the evictions on Tuesday 13th January – with again a huge crowd outside – the outcome is expected to be known on 25th January. 13.1.2016

Sunday Times reports how Heathrow has paid its owners dividends of £2.1 billion since 2012 – but just £24 million in Corporation Tax

The Sunday Times reported that Heathrow has paid its owners back £2.1 billion in dividends, starting in 2012. But it has only paid a total of £24 million in corporation tax since 2006, with that payment being last year. Heathrow's owners are rewarded whenever the value of the airport increases. If new airport infrastructure is built, the passengers pay for it through the £20 cost on their ticket (and other spending), and the owners benefit.



The CAA calculates how much is spent on investment, and allows Heathrow's investors to earn a return on the total. The more Heathrow spends, the more its backers can earn. If

Heathrow was to spend £17.6 billion on its expansion, the value of the airport would be considered to have increased that much. Due to the huge debts Heathrow has (£12.5 billion out of the £16 billion Ferrovial paid in 2006) the airport's banks prevented dividends to owners, until 2012. They got £240 million in 2012, which has risen to £2.1 billion. Some of the proceeds of the sale of Gatwick, Edinburgh etc has been used for dividends. The Sunday Times says: ..."with a debt-to-assets ratio of about 85% is one of the most heavily indebted airports in the world."

Heathrow will have to recoup the money by high passenger charges, years before the runway is built and open, as otherwise Heathrow's massive investors are not prepared to take the financial risk. Willie Walsh has said IAG is not prepared to pay such high charges (see below). Heathrow is no longer a company quoted on the stock exchange, but that could happen in future. 10.1.2016

Details at <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=29202>

Willie Walsh threatens to move BA to develop base in Dublin or Madrid to avoid paying for "gold plated" Heathrow runway plans



Willie Walsh, CEO of British Airways' parent company, IAG, has said BA might give up on Heathrow and move overseas, if Heathrow got a new "gold plated" runway and doubled its charges to airlines. The current landing charge of about £40 for a return trip would increase to at least £80 with the runway. That might deter passengers.

He said BA could "develop our business" in Dublin or Madrid rather than pay for the expansion of Heathrow. "We won't pay for it and we most certainly won't pre-fund the construction of any new infrastructure." Mr Walsh said that the £17.6 billion plan to expand Heathrow represented an attempt by a "monopoly airport" to build "gold-plated facilities and fleece its airlines and their customers".

Only a tiny part (£251 – from the Airports Commission calculation) of the estimated cost of £17.6 billion is for the runway itself. Willie Walsh indicated that Heathrow remained his preferred option for a runway, but not if it cost of £17.6 billion. "...Heathrow is not IAG's only hub. We can develop our business via Madrid, which has spare capacity, and Dublin, where there are plans for a cost-effective and efficient second runway.". Mr Walsh also opposes a runway at Gatwick, as "no one would move there while Heathrow remains open." 11.12.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=28962>

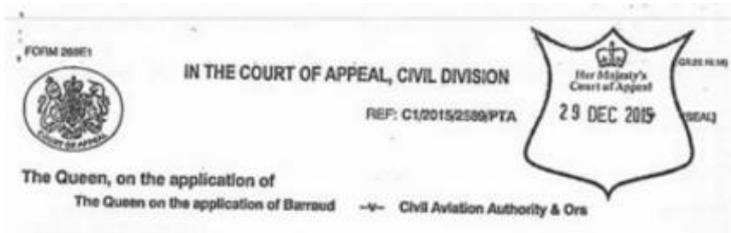
Sunday Times reports that Heathrow wants to recoup its Crossrail costs by extra charges for passengers

The Crossrail link to Heathrow is due to open by the end of 2019, and it is expected that this will cut the travel time from Liverpool Street station to Heathrow from 55 minutes to 34 minutes. Heathrow built and paid for a 5.3 mile long stretch of line linking its terminals with the main line to Paddington station. But the Sunday Times reports that now Heathrow wants to recoup the cost of building this stretch of line, which was completed almost 20 years ago, from users of Crossrail. The DfT estimates that meeting Heathrow's claim could add over £40m on to the annual cost of running Crossrail. The DfT believes Heathrow should not get this money back. Heathrow is keen to avoid paying for anything....

If Heathrow gets its way, rail passengers would have to pay inflated prices to travel to Heathrow. Transport for London (TfL), which will oversee Crossrail, will have to decide whether to claw back the cost through ticket prices on the line, or spread it across the whole of London's transport network. Heathrow says it paid over £1 billion for the tracks, trains and depots, and to get this back, it wants a fee of £597, plus a maintenance charge of £138, to be paid by Crossrail every time one of its trains uses the line. Heathrow also owns Heathrow Express, Britain's most expensive train service (£26.50 from Paddington to Heathrow). The decision on any financial deal will be in the hands of the Office of Rail and Road (ORR). 27.12.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=29059>

“Gatwick Obviously NOT” given permission to take their JR of the CAA to the Appeal Court

The group, "Gatwick Obviously NOT" (GON) has received the welcome news that their appeal to be allowed to make a Judicial Review (JR) against the CAA has been successful. They have now won Permission to go to a Full Hearing in the Appeal Court. In March 2015, Martin Baraud, the Chair of GON, served a JR upon the CAA, with Gatwick Airport Ltd and the Secretary of State for Transport as an 'Interested Party'. The "Ground of Claim" is that there has indeed been a change in the use of airspace and that the CAA should first have consulted on such change before it was put into effect by GAL and NATS.



In August, they were refused permission to proceed with the JR. Taking advice from their QC, John Steel, they appealed. GON say the judge, Mr Justice Haddon-Cave, while refusing the Permission, added a postscript, seeming to suggest that there may be an issue about the need for consultation for 'seismic' events (such

as the flight path changes introduced without notice) that is more a matter for the law-makers, not the lawyers. Now GON are pleased that the Judge The Rt. Hon. Lord Justice Burnett has stated that the case - very significantly - must be held in the Appeal Court rather than the High Court. This is in order to "obtain an authoritative ruling on the meaning of relevant provisions, which govern similar arrangements at airports other than Gatwick". 5.1.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=29130>

Report by independent consultants, Helios, highly critical of CAA over its airspace change process

Helios, a management and technology consultancy, was contracted by the CAA to undertake an independent review of its airspace change (AC) decision-making process. Its report presents the results of the review together with Helios' recommendations for a revised AC process. There have been a huge number of complaints in the last few years about how the CAA deals with airspace change, and the inadequate way in which it communicates with the public.

Helios is highly critical of the way the CAA has conducted consultations about flight paths at airports across the UK, saying there has been a lack of transparency. Helios also says there is a problem in the CAA being both judge and jury.

The report came just ten days after the CAA announced that it would allow London City Airport to concentrate its flight paths. (See below) That decision was severely criticized by campaign group HACAN East, which complained about the lack of proper consultation - most people did not know they would be getting concentrated plane noise in future. The CAA refused to re-consult. The Helios report has called for an Oversight Committee to be set up to allow people to challenge the CAA's decisions on flights paths. 9.12.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=28898>



Anger at disgraceful failure of the CAA or London City Airport to consult properly on flight path changes

In a blog about the disgraceful failure of London City Airport and the CAA to consult properly on changes to flight paths, John Stewart explains just how unjust this is. The CAA allowed London City Airport to concentrate all its flight paths without any meaningful consultation with residents. In effect, the changes will mean the creation of noise ghettos, from 4th February 2016. The approximately 70% of the time, when the wind is westerly, Bow, Leyton, Leytonstone, etc will get all the departures from the airport, and Thamesmead will get arrivals. The 30% of the time with easterly winds, departures will go over Barking Riverside, Dagenham and Hornchurch, and arrivals will go over Sidcup, New Eltham, etc.

Most of these communities have not been informed about the changes, or the noise to which they will be subjected. In 2014 London City carried out the most minimalist of consultations and said the changes were not significant. Before Christmas, the CAA agreed with City Airport that the change was not significant.

Hacan East believes the changes are very significant. The recent report by Helios seriously criticised the CAA for its inadequate consultations. Hacan East says the CAA has let people affected by London City Airport down badly, and there has been injustice. "As Thomas Jefferson might have said, "When injustice becomes law, rebellion becomes duty." " 11.1.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=29219>

Comment by GACC on government runway statement: Gatwick is not an easy option, especially on surface access

GACC (the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign) said, in responding to the news that the government is postponing its runway decision for at least 6 months - and therefore leaving Gatwick as a possible location, that it is not surprised. Gatwick is not an easy option to Heathrow. Though there are almost insurmountable environmental (and other) obstacles to a 3rd Heathrow runway, there are very substantial problems at Gatwick too. And no solutions have been found for them.

At Gatwick these problems include aggravating the north-south divide; 50,000 people would be affected by worse air quality; there would be a need for a new town the size of Crawley; three times as many people as at present would be affected by severe levels of aircraft noise; and the road and rail system could not cope, when the airport approached full capacity.

A key issue that has so far been neglected by government, or the Commission, is the real cost of the road and rail infrastructure work that would be required for a 2nd Gatwick runway. The M23 and M25 would need major widening, the M23 would need to be extended into London, several new A roads would need to be built east and west of Gatwick, and the Brighton main rail line would need extensive work – all of which could be just as costly as anything needed at Heathrow.

It is often said that the Gatwick infrastructure costs would be less than at Heathrow but that is based on calculations for the year 2030 when the forecasts show a new runway at Heathrow handling over four times as many passengers as a new runway at Gatwick.

The reality is that the annual number of Gatwick flights, even with the increase in 2015, is now only 6.7% higher than it was in 2000, though the number of passengers rose 26% in that time. The number of flights is only 3.4% higher than in 2007, though the number of passengers increased by 14.5% in that time. 11.12.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=28945>

Lilian Greenwood displays the confused thinking of Labour in its enthusiasm for a runway

The Labour party remains in a mess on what to do on runways. They have a position of stating that "Labour will study the government's proposals carefully, alongside any additional material that is commissioned, and we will respond on the basis of our four tests for aviation expansion. These are:

1. That robust and convincing evidence was produced that the Commission's recommendations would provide sufficient capacity.
2. That the UK's legal climate change obligations could still be met.
3. That local noise and environmental impacts can be managed and minimised.
4. That the benefits of any expansion were not confined to London and the South East."



But, though Lilian Greenwood, the Shadow Transport Secretary herself apparently bought up a bit of Airplot in 2009 to prevent a Heathrow runway, she now says: "There is no doubt ... that we need a new runway." And "Aviation expansion is a matter of national significance and, having

committed to addressing the problem head on, David Cameron faces a loss of credibility if he ducks the issue now. The UK needs additional capacity, but the prospect of any expansion is now in doubt." But Labour itself says the runway has to meet the 4 conditions. And in reality that is not possible. So Labour's position is very unclear. Sadiq Khan claims to be concerned about the environment, but this seems to extend – in terms of aviation – only to Heathrow. 30.12.2015

<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=29112>

Sadiq Khan's environmental concerns mean rightly opposing Heathrow runway – but vanish in relation to Gatwick or London City airport

Labour Mayoral candidate, Sadiq Khan, backed a runway at Heathrow until June 2015, when he came out against it, partly realising the air quality problems had an unacceptably bad impact on Londoners. Due to the extent of Heathrow opposition, he realised he would not be elected if he backed a Heathrow runway.



Sadiq has made various statements about how he is concerned the environment and wants to be "the greenest mayor London's ever had." He also has plans to "put radical environment improvements 'front and centre'" in his campaign, plant 2 million trees, and implement a major extension of the "ultra-low emissions zone" – which bans the most polluting vehicles.

All that is great. But his care for the environment runs out when it comes to Gatwick. He backs a 2nd runway there, and is trying to persuade the Labour party to do so too.

Appreciating just how unpopular airport expansion is at Heathrow, largely due to the extensive negative impacts over a wide area, Sadiq appears keen to dump that sort of misery on those who are not able to vote against him - living outside London. He seems to have been taken in by Gatwick's PR and charm offensive, (photo of Stewart Wingate and Sadiq Khan at Gatwick) believing there would be thousands of jobs for people in Croydon and his constituency, Tooting. That demonstrates a combination of nimbyism and self-interest. He also backs expansion of London City Airport. 8.1.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=29155>

DEFRA produces plan to improve air quality – Client Earth regards it as inadequate

A ruling by the Supreme Court in April 2015 required the government to produce a comprehensive plan to meet air pollution limits by December. The government has now produced this. The intention is that it has to include low emission zones, congestion charging and other economic incentives. It is thought that due to



the failure to meet European limits of harmful NOx gases, which are mostly caused by diesel traffic, there are up to 9,500 premature deaths each year in London alone.

Under the government's plan, "Clean Air Zones" will be introduced - by 2020 - in areas of Birmingham, Leeds, Nottingham, Derby and Southampton where pollution is most serious. However, though vehicles like old buses, taxis, coaches and lorries have to pay a charge to enter these zones - private passenger cars will not be charged.

Alan Andrews from Client Earth, the lawyers who brought the legal case against the UK government, for breaching the EU's Air Quality Directive, said that exempting privately-owned passenger cars was the plan's biggest weakness. Also newer vehicles that meet the latest emission standards will not need to pay. Client Earth said the plan falls far short of the action necessary to comply with the Supreme Court ruling, and they will make a legal challenge to force the government to take faster action to achieve legal pollution limits. They say "As soon as possible" or by 2020 is just not soon enough. 18.12.2015

<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=29019>

Heathrow again promoting its “sticking plaster” solution of adobe huts for school noise problem

Last April, keen to persuade politicians that a 3rd Heathrow runway should be allowed, the airport said it was installing noise insulation at the 42 schools and other community buildings (31 in Hounslow) where it promised in 2005 to carry out the work. It has taken 10 years so far.

Heathrow said in April 2015 that a total of 10 schools would have adobe structures in their playgrounds by the end of the year. They now say 7 are done with 7 more in the pipeline. The domes are meant to provide a quieter place in the playground, where the aircraft noise of about 87 decibels outside (Hounslow Heath infant school) is cut to 70 decibels. Bearing in mind that average speech is around 60 decibels, and a teacher needs to be able to project their voice at least 10 decibels over background noise, that is still not good. To be heard, a teacher would have to shout.



There are concerns that the adobe structures don't solve the noise problems for schools under Heathrow flight paths. The issue for young children is that they need to play together, and hear each other while playing. That is not easy with a plane nearly over head every minute. The educational disadvantages of schools affected by aircraft noise are now sufficiently well researched; considerable evidence exists to show that it can mean young children suffer impaired performance.

The extent of the noise bombardment stuns people unused to it. When a group from Stansted airport visited Hounslow Heath school several years, one commented: "It would not be an exaggeration to say that we rural community people were numbed by the experience and our hearts went out to the teachers and particularly the young children." 9.1.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=29145>

2,000 small “No 3rd runway” planes planted near Parliament (one for each plane per day)

A large group of Heathrow anti-runway campaigners gathered near Parliament, in Victoria Gardens, to plant rows of small black planes, each with the message "No 3rd Runway." The number planted - 2,000 - is the number of aircraft that would use Heathrow per day, with a fully used 3rd runway. That is a total of 730,000 flights per year, up from the total cap at present of 480,000 per year. Heathrow says it could be 740,000 flights



The event, timed to coincide with the first day Parliament resumed this year, was to highlight the fact that 2016 will be a grim year for residents if a 3rd runway is given the go-ahead. Of the 2,000 planes, about 500 were planted by HACAN; about 400 by CHATR (the group in Chiswick); about 300 by Friends of the Earth; and about 800 by SHE - Stop Heathrow Expansion - to symbolise that around 800 homes would be demolished for the runway. After the government delayed its decision on a runway, expected in December, until some time in summer 2016, or shortly after the summer, the anguish and uncertainty for all those facing the threat of a new runway continue. There are yet more stressful and worrying months ahead - but the campaign against the Heathrow 3rd runway is in fighting form, and ever more determined. 5.1.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=29122>

No 3rd Runway Protest Advan tours areas of London and the Home Counties



An Advan, with a “No third runway” message plastered on its sides, toured a range of areas, in London and in the Home Counties, that will be affected if there was to be a new runway. At all its stops, it was met by a range of local residents, councillors or MPs who posed with the van, and to talk to the local press.

The van was in action for three days, 3rd to 5th December, and was sponsored by a coalition of groups. On Friday 4th, a car playing loud aircraft noise, approximately every minute to illustrate what it would be like under a flight path, followed the van along parts of the 3rd runway arrival flight path route across London.

All the local groups along the Advan’s 3rd runway route, and many others, know a 3rd runway would mean intense plane noise. For many tens of thousands, it would mean being under a flight path for the first time. The groups that took part in the Advan promotion included HACAN, SHE, CHATR, CAIAN, RAGE, TAG, EANAG and AirportWatch. They are working together to put out a strong message that they will fight any new runway, tooth and nail. 4.12.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=28842>

Activists who blocked Heathrow tunnel plead not guilty – further hearing in 2016



On 23rd December, there was a brief court hearing at Uxbridge Magistrates Court, for the 3 activists who blocked a main Heathrow entrance tunnel on 26th November. They pleaded not guilty. Another hearing will therefore be arranged in 2016.

Many supporters of the activists attended the hearing and gathered outside the court beforehand. After the court hearing, runway opponents - including many local residents

who face destruction of their homes and communities if a runway is built - met outside the court. Wearing Santa hats, they sang a few Christmas carols and jingles (with two or three accompanying policemen).

The next court date for 13 Plane Stupid airport activists, who occupied part of the Heathrow north runway in July 2015, will be Monday 18th January 2016 at 9am at Willesden Magistrates' Court. The trial is due to last up to 6 days. All 13 activists are asserting their right to defend the climate and the communities negatively impacted by Heathrow, and are pleading not guilty. Plane Stupid invites people who sympathise with the actions taken by the activists, and want to support them in court, to come along. They say: "Bring cake and banners - or just yourselves!" For 9am. 23.12.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=29050>

Gatwick sets up a “Noiselab” website, so people can see more about its plane noise

Gatwick airport realises the increased impact of the noise from its planes is causing considerable upset, anger and opposition. As part of its PR offensive, to try to persuade people that it is going everything possible to minimise noise and take people's complaints ("concerns" in Gatwick language) seriously, it has launched a website called "Noiselab" as a noise monitoring tool. The aim is to allow people to look at the

noise close to various monitors and see how much is from aircraft, how many flights etc. It does not appear that many of these noise monitors are new. The noise level readings at the various monitoring points are only given as averaged LAeq values over a 16-hour day and an 8-hour night. This averaging process destroys the usefulness of this tool as a measure of noise annoyance, especially under flight paths.

What people hear is the noise level (L_{Amax}) of each aircraft. The “fly-over” average also reduces the actual noise nuisance experienced, and there is no measure of background noise levels (LA₉₀) against which each aircraft noise event is clearly heard. However the network of monitors should be welcomed because they could be put to proper use, for example if L_{Amax} measurements were taken and the N70 metric [this means the number of noise events noisier than 70dB] was used and the “fly-over” value was given as a Sound Exposure Level (SEL). 4.1.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=29080>

Gatwick objects to new hospice due to increase in ‘bird strike risk hazard’ – as within 13 km radius of airport

Under guidance from the DfT, airports have to be statutory consultees for any planning application within a radius of 13 km of the airport, that might have an impact on it, for a variety of reasons. One of these is the risk of bird strike, and so new developments that might attract birds are opposed.

Now Gatwick Airport has objected to plans for a new hospice and homes in Pease Pottage [south of Crawley, and about 6km south of Gatwick airport] due to an increase in ‘bird strike risk hazard’. Gatwick says the areas of open water in the application would attract birds large enough to endanger planes, including feral geese, duck, grey heron and cormorants - especially if the public feed them.

Gatwick also fear the mown grassland would provide a grazing habitat for birds. Gatwick wants minimal water. However, it cannot prevent there being any bird-friendly bodies of water or habitats around an airport, even if it can influence local planning applications. Airports keep their grassed areas as unappealing to bird life as possible. Gatwick set out, for the Airports Commission, what it would do to “control and where possible reduce bird hazard.” For many forms of wildlife, airports are not great neighbours. 31.12.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=29078>

“Plane Wrong” critical of CAA’s PIR decision to permit new Gatwick easterly take-off route to continue

The CAA published its long-awaited Post Implementation Review report in early November. Gatwick is required by the CAA to change one westerly departure route (Route 4) that affects people in many villages to the South of Dorking and across to Reigate and Redhill. This has to revert back to being within the NPR (noise preferential route) as before. Local group, Plane Wrong, set up in response to the noise problems caused, says it welcomes the decision and wants this to be implemented rapidly so that residents do not have to suffer the noise for another summer.

Plane Wrong is, however, dismayed at the CAA decision in respect of Route 3, which is not to be changed despite the fact that many more people are significantly affected by the change. This appears to have been entirely ignored. Plane Wrong has considerable doubts about some of the methodologies employed by the CAA to reach both these decisions. On the change to Route 4, Plane Wrong says the changes should be completed quickly, though the CAA has to test the change in simulators for Boeing and Airbus. They do not yet know when this work will take place. There is a 2 month period that has to elapse after that, and there is no indication yet of when this will end. 20.12.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=29034>

Letter to Bo Redeborn – re. Gatwick flight path review: “Don’t let us down”

People living in areas around Penshurst, Crowborough, Tunbridge Wells, Bidborough etc began to suffer from far worse Gatwick noise from early 2014. Changes had been made to Gatwick arrivals flight paths, without consultation. There is now an independent review being undertaken, of the changes. It is being done by Bo Redeborn and Graham Lake, and will be published on 28th January. It is hoped that this will not be a whitewash.

A resident from a village in West Kent has written to Bo Redeborn, expressing very clearly the necessity of the review being genuinely independent, and avoiding the ambiguities, evasions and half-truths that have plagued the whole flight path change situation from its start. The writer says: "Until or unless you are able to tell us precisely what changed, why it changed, who proposed it and who authorised it then to all intents and purposes this really is 'vectoring choices'. If this is not PBN, if this is not SESAR, if this is not government directed policy, then this really is caused by a bunch of ATCs [Air Traffic Controllers] making arbitrary decisions to send planes down pig trails. So it can, and should, be restored 'overnight' as confirmed by Charles Kirwan-Taylor."

S/he concludes: "Mr Redeborn, an awful lot of people are depending upon you to repair their shattered lives; don't let us down." See the whole letter 30.12.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=29072>

Gatwick re-hashes its plans to add runway capacity in 4 phases, rather than all at the start

Gatwick are hoping they can get some advantage over Heathrow, by making much of their plans to develop the extra runway capacity in phases - not building all the ancillary infrastructure at the start. This in fact has been their plan for a long time - it is nothing new. The Airports Commission assessed it in 2014.

Gatwick may not be able to secure the necessary funding to build everything at once, and only be able to pay for it over many decades. In the 1st phase, Gatwick hope to build the runway and basic 3rd terminal, costing about £3 billion, perhaps by 2025. This would increase capacity to about 63 million passengers, from a maximum now of 45 million.

The 2nd and 3rd phases would expand the terminal, build new aircraft gates and fully divert the A23 around the airport.

The 4th phase would be the completion of the terminal and piers, while finishing off taxiways for passenger jets by 2040. The aim would be to add more as passenger numbers build up.

The Airports Commission always saw the numbers of passengers rising only slowly at Gatwick, and taking a long time to double (not even taking account of the higher costs to pay for the runway etc, that would be passed to passengers, reducing demand). That does indicate that there is no great pent up demand for a huge number more flights. Let alone significant demand for business flights to emerging economies. 18.12.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=29014>

Ministers should publish details of flight paths for new Heathrow or Gatwick runway

One of the glaring omissions from the Airports Commission's report and its areas of research was to establish the flight paths for the three short listed options. As the noise impact is an absolutely critical factor in the opposition to a new runway, information on these routes is key.

But because UK airspace is being re-designed at present, there is no certainty even about the existing flight paths several years ahead, let alone new ones. It would be unavoidable that tens or hundreds of new people would be overflown for the first time by planes using a new runway. So far, these people are entirely unaware of the problems they would face.

Ruth Cadbury asked Patrick McLoughlin about this in relation to Heathrow on 14th December: "Will he force Heathrow airport to declare where the flight paths will be, particularly the approach paths..." Sadiq Khan said Londoners had been "kept in the dark for too long" on the runway decision, and detailed flight paths should be published for a Heathrow 3rd runway to show which communities would be blighted by more noise. With the information on the impacts of aircraft noise and health, from the report mentioned above, this is particularly important – the flight paths will have health (and therefore cost) implications.

The same are needed for areas affected by Gatwick, especially as it has far more night flights than Heathrow. Zac Goldsmith has already published indicative routes for Heathrow, but these are just speculative at present. 15.12.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=28986>

John Redwood losing patience with inadequate responses on aircraft noise from John Holland-Kaye

John Redwood, the MP for Wokingham, has been in correspondence with Heathrow's CEO John Holland-Kaye, about the considerable increase in aircraft noise that his constituents have been subjected to since mid-2014. Mr Holland-Kaye wrote, setting out a long list of possible improvements to how much noise Heathrow flights might produce. John Redwood replied: "The changes that NATS made, without consultation, in June 2014 to the Compton Gate have resulted in incessant noise over the Wokingham area due to the concentration of flights over one area, rather than their dispersal. The various mitigating effects that you have described to me over the past months appear good in theory but they are having no effect on reducing the noise level above our houses.

"I have no wish to engage in a continuous dialogue or await some new consultation. What I and my constituents wish to see is a return to the pre-June 2014 dispersal and Gate policies. It is difficult to see why Wokingham would wish to support an expansion of the airport if this matter cannot be put right promptly." So, roll on the consultation by the CAA this year, and then the other by the DfT, on aircraft noise and airspace change. So this, as at other airports, illustrates how residents are adamant that flight path changes persist, but the airports etc insist they do not. (See Edinburgh case below) 3.1.2016
<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=29099>

Heathrow passengers up 2.2% last year compared to 2014; ATMs up 0.3%; air cargo down 0.2%

Nearly 75 million passengers travelled through Heathrow in 2015, an increase of 2.2% on 2014 and the airport's highest ever number of annual passengers. The number of flights (air transport movements) was up 0.3% on 2014. The number of seats per aircraft increased by 2.1% to 209, and passengers per aircraft rose to 1.9% to 160. But the average load factor remained constant at 76.5%. (For 2013, Heathrow said its average load factor was 76.4%, and average number of passengers per aircraft was 154.8). At the end of 2015, over 20 daily A380 departures and arrivals were operated by eight airlines

"Heathrow continued to play a leading role in helping Britain's exports reach global markets, with the UK's largest port by value recording cargo volumes of 1.5 million metric tonnes for the year." That is Heathrow's way of saying the cargo tonnage fell by 0.2% in 2015 compared with 2014. Heathrow says "emerging markets continued to be a driver of traffic growth at Heathrow", with passenger volumes up 8% to Latin America and 6% to the Middle East. They also say passenger volumes during 2015 were up 14% to China. That's confusing, as the increase in passengers to the "Asia/Pacific" area, which includes China, only rose by 0.3% for the year. Heathrow itself admits it has terminal capacity for 90 million passengers, so at 75 million, it is not "full". The Airports Commission said that would not happen till 2030. 11.1.2016
<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=29209>

Linlithgow MSP sends her own 42-page report on impact of Edinburgh flight path trial to CAA

The "TUTUR" flight path trial at Edinburgh airport created a storm of protest, from those finding themselves under a new, narrow flight path for the first time. The trial had to be stopped two months early, in October, because of the opposition. Now Fiona Hyslop, the MSP for Linlithgow, which was partly overflowed in the trial, has herself surveyed 2,000 residents in West Lothian to find out their views. She has sent her 42-page report to the CAA.

Ms Hyslop said the reason for her report was that residents had been kept in the dark about the potential for a new Edinburgh flight path and although the CAA "will receive a report from Edinburgh Airport stating that the complaints they received have originated from a small number of residents who have repeatedly complained, Edinburgh Airport did not proactively contact each individual resident as I have."

Of the 2,000 surveyed, she found that 1,220 respondents felt that noise created by planes overhead was intrusive or disturbing while they were in their house with the windows shut. 760 of those surveyed found that there had been either no change, that the noise was barely noticeable or that it was tolerable. In two areas, the number saying they had been adversely affected were 71% and 60%. These results give a much fuller picture of the noise impact than "simply stating the results from two temporary noise monitors as Edinburgh Airport propose to do." 3.1.2016 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=29089>

International aviation and shipping omitted from Paris agreement – despite their huge CO2 emissions

The Paris COP21 talks ended with an agreement, which is regarded by many as encouraging and setting the ground for positive progress in coming years. Others regard the agreement as being weak, setting no dates or targets - and having no actual promises of action by participating governments. Some of the strongest criticism has come from renowned climate scientist James Hansen: "It's just worthless words. There is no action, just promises. ...As long as fossil fuels appear to be the cheapest fuels out there, they will be continued to be burned."

The Paris agreement should be signed by countries early in 2016 – with actions to cut carbon emissions, from 2020 onwards.

The weak paragraph, for possible insertion in to the final text, just said the Parties might "pursue the limitation or reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, working through ICAO, with a view to agreeing concrete measures addressing these emissions....". However, in the end, it was removed.

Therefore international aviation and shipping were omitted altogether from the final 31 page text. As the two sectors account for around 8% of global CO2 emissions, their exclusion is significant. Without proper regulation, or targets for cuts in their emissions, estimates suggest aviation and shipping could account for as much as one-third of global emissions by 2050 as demand for air travel increases, and as emissions from other sectors such as energy generation are curbed.

Unsurprisingly a press release from ICAO (the International Civil Aviation Organization) says how delighted it is at the outcome of the COP21, and how now: "Every State and every global industrial sector must now redouble their efforts toward achieving substantial progress on emissions reduction if the COP21 legacy is to be achieved, and the civil aviation community is no exception."

Somehow the exclusion of aviation from the Paris agreement is interpreted by ICAO as "a vote of confidence in the progress ICAO and the aviation community have achieved thus far." That is a pretty incredible statement, bearing in mind ICAO's record of utterly dismal failure to produce any worthwhile progress over some 18 years. ICAO is meant to be working on developing a "market based measure" (MBM) for global aviation by September 2016. Expectations for how likely this is, or how effective it will be, are very low.

Lobby groups have also been appalled at the slow pace of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) in coming up with strong measures to curb CO2 from shipping. 12.12.2015
<http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=28979>

Simon Jenkins: Never mind a third runway – what Heathrow needs is managed decline

In a brilliantly written comment piece in the Guardian, Simon Jenkins sets out some timely thoughts on the matter of a new runway. People should read the whole article - it is so well written. Taking a few extracts, Simon says: "Never take a fact from a lobbyist. Heathrow runways have nothing to do with 'vital British



business'. The idea that spending a staggering £18bn on one runway is economically essential is ludicrous. The economy has far more need of better roads to ports, more commuter trains or cheaper electricity.... “

“A full 80% of London’s airport capacity serves one industry: foreign leisure travel. That industry is, overwhelmingly, Britons going abroad, and is thus negative to the balance of payments. Business export travel is a trivial part of the sum. If this whole argument were really about something “essential”, Heathrow would cancel its 20% of domestic flights and discontinue all tourist destinations. If more capacity were really so vital, then the market would have spoken.” ...

"The days of deciding on infrastructure through “predict and provide” should be over." ... "Heathrow should be phased out or – like City airport – confined to predominantly business destinations. Air travel should be discouraged not encouraged, and airlines dispersed closer to their markets across Britain.”
Wow. 11.12.2015 <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=28974>

Is travel now the ultimate “must-have” possession, used to define who we think we are?

David Jobanputra is an anthropologist and film maker, who has given much thought to why we travel so much. He has looked at travel largely as something rich westerners do, in more exotic lands. But he also asks about travel in the way it has now become a serious consumer product, and one through which we try to define ourselves - sophisticated, trendy, caring, bold, discerning etc. "We choose a personal brand identity to which we aspire and the travel industry supplies us with the right product to match."

He makes some perceptive comments:... "Consumption is our lifejacket. It is also our straitjacket." ... "We buy status, power, a sense of inclusion. We even buy our adventures. In the age of consumerism, everything is commoditised ... including tourism.... Transnational travel makes culture a commodity. When the ethic of consumption is extended to new people and places, everything comes with a price. Visit to the palace - \$12; mountain trek - \$35; traditional dance performance - \$8; sense of self-worth - priceless.

"Today’s holiday brochures boast bargains like an Argos catalogue; instead of homeware and cheap electronics, we find tigers, temples and tribal villages. All are commodities, just the same. We buy these things for the same reason we buy any other non-essential product: to look better, feel better or else appear better." 3.1.2016 Food for thought <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/?p=29105>

Some Useful Links

- For large amounts of up-to-date news on airports and aviation, see **AirportWatch's** news pages <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/latest-news/>
 - For daily transport news in the UK - **Transportinfo** at transportinfo.org.uk
 - European **Transport & Environment (T&E)** <http://www.transportenvironment.org>
Twitter @transenv
 - News and expert analysis on the **AEF** website at www.aef.org.uk and on **Twitter @The_AEF**
 - **HACAN** www.hacan.org.uk **Twitter @HACAN1**
and **GACC** www.gacc.org.uk/latest-news
 - **Stop Heathrow Expansion (SHE)** <http://www.stopheathrowexpansion.co.uk>
 - **Communities Against Increased Aircraft Noise (CAIAN)** <http://caian.co.uk/> - Heathrow flight paths
 - **Gatwick Obviously NOT** <http://www.gatwickobviouslynot.org/>
 - **AirportWatch Europe** <http://www.airportwatcheurope.com> **Twitter @AirportWatchEU**
 - **ACIPA** – the group opposing the planned Nantes airport at NDDL <https://www.acipa-ndf.fr>
- Follow **AirportWatch** on **Twitter @AirportWatch** and **Facebook** [on.fb.me/UoSkEx](https://www.facebook.com/UoSkEx)

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