

30th May: Stansted Public Inquiry Opens

Big show of support on the first day



Hundreds of people turned up for the first day of the Public Inquiry into BAA's plans to lift the cap on the number of flights using the existing runway at Stansted. And the nation's media also descended. It is a tribute to Stop Stansted Expansion that they attracted this level of media attention. It is also a reflection of how high up the media agenda aviation has risen. The Inquiry is expected to last until at least the autumn. Stop Stansted Expansion invites as many people as possible from all over the country to come to attend the Inquiry, even for a day, to show their support.

- **For more details** www.stopstanstedexpansion.com

2nd Runway at Birmingham Ruled Out

Plans for a £2 billion second runway at Birmingham are to be shelved indefinitely. The Airport's Master Plan, due out this summer, will conclude that passenger figures are unlikely to be high enough to justify an additional runway for at least 25 years. The decision will be seen as a rebuff to the Government's 2003 Aviation White Paper which forecast that Birmingham would be handling 38 million passengers by 2030 – up from 9 million in 2006. But the Master Plan is certain to include a £120 million extension to the existing Birmingham runway to enable long-haul flights to travel to the Far East and the west coast of America without stopping to refuel. Scrapping the second runway will be widely welcomed by many communities around the airport. James Botham, Secretary of Birmingham Airport Anti-Noise Group (BANG), said, "We have argued ever since the idea was first seriously put forward that the second runway was a flight of fancy." However, more planes on the existing runway can only mean more misery for people under the existing flight paths. In Birmingham there are a large number of communities, many of them low-income, living close to the airport.

14th – 21st August: Climate Camp at Heathrow Area

This year's Climate Camp will pitch its tents near Heathrow. The first Climate Camp took place last year outside Selby in Yorkshire. It attracted hundreds of people concerned about climate change and climaxed in a high-profile attempt to occupy Drax Power Station. This year's camp is expected to attract many more people. Although it is about direct action, it is also "eight days of low-impact living, debates and learning skills." People are welcome to go for the eight days or just visit for a day. Although the climate camp has ruled out an invasion of the runways at Heathrow Airport, security is expected to be tight.

- **For more information check out www.climatecamp.org.uk**

As opposition to expansion at Heathrow grows by the month.....

The opposition to the expansion plans at the UK's largest airport is growing by the month. It now includes Ken Livingstone, the London Assembly, the South-East Regional Assembly, the 2M group of local authorities (i.e. all the local councils in the area), local campaign groups HACAN and NOTRAG, Plane Stupid, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, Transport 2000 and other national environmental organisations, the Liberal Democrats, the Green Party and the vast majority of MPs in the area. The extent and unity of this opposition is unlike anything any government has previously faced when they wanted to expand the airport.

Last month Plane Stupid occupied BAA headquarters at Heathrow



In their own words: Green activists today marked the tenth anniversary of Tony Blair coming to power by visiting his best friends in industry to highlight the revolving door between Labour and the aviation industry and his failure to tackle climate change. A team of protestors from climate action group, Plane Stupid, are blocking the 'revolving door' to BAA's Heathrow HQ to oppose government and industry plans for airport expansion.

New owner pledges growth at Leeds/Bradford Airport

The private equity group Bridgepoint bought Leeds/Bradford Airport last month and immediately announced £70 plans to more than double passenger numbers. It wants to develop both the runway and the terminal buildings to increase capacity to 7 million by 2015 and to expand the current 40 scheduled routes to 60 in about five years. The previous owners – a consortium of five West Yorkshire councils – made £145.5 million from the sale.

7th July: Live Earth Concert on in London

"I Count" - of which AirportWatch is a member - is the official Live Earth UK partner. Live Earth UK is part of a string of 24-hour, 7-continent Live Earth concerts raising awareness about climate change, for which they hope to get an audience of more than 2 billion people, and motivate them to combat the climate crisis. The concerts will be broadcast on the BBC in the UK and on more than 120 networks around the world. The organisers of the Wembley concert have tried hard to get bands which are in Europe already, and won't need to fly in - the bands themselves know they will get evil publicity if found jetting in for the event (in private jets in particular), and the

few that fly claim they will be offsetting. "I Count" is keen to put across a message that offsetting is not a panacea, nor very effective, and is only the last option if flying is unavoidable. Whatever the reservations about getting thousands of people to fly miles to attend these concerts, Live Earth might be a milestone in awareness raising, getting many young people interested and thinking what they can do.

- **You can find out more at: www.icount.org.uk**

National News

Planning White Paper Aims to Curtail Public Inquiries

Two weeks ago the Government issued its Planning White Paper for consultation. Its aim is to speed up major developments such as airports, runways and nuclear power stations. The current public inquiry system would be replaced by a new system. For each policy area the Government would produce a National Policy Statement. The White Paper explains the process: "following thorough and effective public consultation and Parliamentary scrutiny, national policy statements to ensure that there is a clear policy framework for nationally significant infrastructure which integrates environmental, economic and social objectives to deliver sustainable development." The actual proposals then would be considered by an "independent" Commission which would simply look at the local and regional impacts of the proposals. This Commission would replace the current Public Inquiry. There are some real concerns about all this. There would be no real forum to test the claims made in national policy statements. For example, there would be nowhere where objectors could challenge government claims that new runways are needed for the economic good of the country. All that objectors could challenge would be the local and regional impacts of a new runway. And even that is in some doubt. The White Paper seems to suggest that the Commission could pick and choose who it would hear evidence from. But the Government has another problem as far as aviation is concerned. The Aviation White Paper of 2003, where the Government set out its policy objectives, was not scrutinised in the way that the Planning White Paper proposes national policy statements should be. The Government might, therefore, run into real difficulties if it tried to argue that the Aviation White Paper in its present form should be regarded as the national policy statement on aviation. Even the Planning WP itself admits the problem in paragraph 3.38:

"Where relevant policy statements already exist we propose that these should acquire the status of national policy statements for the purposes of decision making by the commission. However, in order for this to be possible, they will need to meet the core elements and standards for national policy statements with regard to both content and consultation. This may mean some modification to existing statements. Departments are considering this, and their proposals for consultation on national policy statements, against the wider policy background of, for example, the Energy Review and the Government's response to recommendations of the Eddington Study of transport policy. Further details on the Government's proposals for the form and timing of national policy statements will be set out after this consultation."

We would have no objections to "modifications" of the Aviation White Paper! The deadline for responses to the Planning White Paper is **17th August**.

- **For more details of the Planning White Paper check out www.communities.gov.uk**

It's official - 13% of the UK's climate change damage is from aviation

Government figures show that in 2005 aviation accounted for 13% of total UK climate change damage. That is an understatement because it is based on departing flights only: if the calculation is based on return flights by UK citizens in 2007 the figure would be nearer 20%. The figure for CO2 alone is 6.3%, but this is multiplied by 2 to take radiative forcing into account. This was confirmed by Gillian Merron, Aviation Minister, in response to a Parliamentary Question by Peter Ainsworth, in the Commons on 2nd May. Domestic aviation - flights just within the UK - is included in the UK's CO2 emissions calculations, but only accounts for 0.4%. There is no internationally

agreed method for allocating emissions between states. Currently international aviation is not included in the UK's climate change inventory (though getting this changed is one of the key demands in the Climate Bill consultation), so this 13% figure has been concealed in the past. The Advertising Standards Authority are still making their minds up about the repeated Ryanair ads stating that air travel is 2% of emissions (which is right for the global figure - not the UK's).

New WDM Report: *Emissions Invisible*



The World Development Movement has produced another excellent report. *Emissions Invisible* argues for the inclusion of international aviation in the draft Climate Change Bill. It argues there is no scientific, economic, social justification for leaving it out. It then goes on to show that it is the richest countries and communities which make the greatest contribution to climate change.

- The UK emits 9.6 tonnes of CO2 per person per year, in comparison with 3.6 tonnes in China, 1 tonne in India, and 0.2 tonnes in Zambia.

- Drax Power station in the UK emits more CO2 in one year than Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique combined.

The report argues that the richest countries that must take the lead in combating climate change.

- **To find out more about the report** www.wdm.org.uk

The Climate Change Bill is expected to be presented to Parliament during the next Parliamentary year, starting in November. If it still excludes aviation, AirportWatch will be mounting a major Parliamentary campaign.

Christian Aid's Cut the Carbon March

Christian Aid is staging a Cut the Carbon March from Belfast to London to highlight the impact of climate change on poor nations. A few people will march all the way but the idea is that people join the march and the related activities in their local areas. Christian Aid welcomes airport and other campaign groups to take part.

The marchers leave **Northern Ireland on 14 July**

Edinburgh: 21st July

Newcastle: 4th August

Leeds: 11th August

Birmingham: 27th August

Cardiff: 8th September

Bristol: 15th September

Bournemouth (Labour Party Conference): 23rd September

Central London: 2nd October (where thousands are expected to join the march).

- **For more details of what is happening in your area call 0207 523 2264 or visit** www.christianaid.org.uk

EU Revising Noise Directives

The European Commission is revising the two key EU directives on noise. The world of EU Directives is hugely complex but, essentially, Directive 2002/49 deals with noise generally and its baby sister, Directive 2002/30, focuses particularly on airports.

Work on revising **Directive 2002/30** is taking place at the moment with a report going to the Parliament and the Commission by the end of the year. Any amendments to the Directive should be in place by the end of 2008. To assist it in its work, DG Transport has appointed the Airport Noise Working Group. Its report will be with the Commission by the end of this month. DG Transport has also commissioned a consultant's study to analyse noise trends at airports, assess future forecasts and make recommendations. The Commission's scope for manoeuvre in revising the Directive is constrained by ICAO (the international aviation body). The biggest problem is that ICAO argues that blanket regulations can't apply across Europe, that each airport needed to be looked at on a case-by-case basis. This means that an EU-wide night time ban, for example, would be very hard to put in place. There may, though, be ways around this. The EU can set Europe-wide regulations if individual airports won't adopt them because they fear that by doing so they would lose out competitively.

Action: AirportWatch is planning to link up with other campaign groups in Europe to lobby on the noise directive. But if you want to see a tightening up of the directive, particularly as far as night flights are concerned, email Ronny Rohart, the official in charge of revising the directive – Ronny.Rohart@cec.eu.int

Recommended revisions to **Directive 2002/49** are not likely to go before the Parliament and the Commission 2009. This directive deals with all aspects of ambient noise. This was the directive which required member states to produce noise maps by 2007 and noise action plans by 2008. The reason that the directive is not being revised until 2009 is that the Commission wants to collate and assess the information it gets from the noise maps and action plans. Its ultimate aim is to harmonise noise indicators and noise methods. It appears that it is this directive which would set any targets and timescales for noise (which the EU air pollution directives have but are currently missing from its noise directives).

World Health Organisation Noise Guidelines Published

The latest noise guidelines from the World Health Organisation (WHO) were published in March. WHO is recommending countries adopt a three-stage approach (to night noise):

1. To get outdoor noise levels down below 55 decibels (averaged over the night). The WHO research shows that at levels above 55 decibels noise is considered as dangerous to public health.
2. To get outdoor noise levels down to 40 decibels. Their research shows that at levels between 40 and 55 decibels the health of 10- 20% of the population (substantial as far as health professionals are concerned) is affected.
3. To get outdoor noise down to 30 decibels. Between 30 and 40 decibels the health of most people is not affected, although there may be a modest impact on vulnerable groups such as children; chronically ill people; and older people.

They are expected to follow adopt a similar tiered approach to daytime noise. 59 countries across the world, including all European countries, had signed up to the previous WHO guidelines, though most of them, like the UK Government, regarded them as "aspirational". The guidelines are not, though, legally binding. The Aviation White Paper merely said 'the Government will take into account existing Guidelines from the World Health Organisation' (section 3.32), without specifically mentioning the Noise Guidelines. The thinking behind the WHO's new three-stage approach is to allow countries to look at realistic targets and timescales for implementation. But the noise work in WHO is in danger of disappearing.

WHO has come under intense pressure from industry, particularly the big American multi-nationals, to abandon its noise work altogether

WHO has come under intense pressure from industry, particularly the big American multi-nationals, to abandon its noise work altogether. It stood firm in producing these targets, but has scaled down its noise work so that now there is only person responsible for noise work. AirportWatch will be working with other campaign and lobby groups to put pressure on politicians to press for noise work at WHO to continue.

- **For more on the WHO work check out their website** www.who.int

Women's Climate Change Manifesto Launched

Last month the Women's Environmental Network and the Women's Institute launched their Climate Change Manifesto. On aviation the Manifesto calls for the "Introduction of a tax on aviation fuel and/or other fiscal measures to ensure the true environmental and social costs of air travel are accounted for" and says that "Women also support measures, such as tougher carbon trading standards and aviation tax, paid by the airlines rather than passengers, which will make business more responsible for the environmental damage they cause." The Manifesto also points out that women are key in deciding on family travel habits and choice of holidays: "Women have immense importance as consumers, taking most of the purchasing decisions that have a direct impact on climate change. Women make the majority of decisions in all of the areas we examined, including choosing a car and family holidays." It also calls for "greater government recognition of the contribution that women are already making in reducing personal and domestic carbon emissions, which account for the majority of the nation's carbon footprint."

- **You can find more at:** <http://www.womens-institute.co.uk/standard.aspx?id=226>

Air Traffic Control Proposes Flight Path Changes

Major changes to airspace and flight paths are expected to be introduced to cater for the predicted increase in the number of aircraft in the sky. National Air Traffic Services (NATS) are proposing to extend some of their airspace in the south west of England. They will also be consulting later this year on airspace changes in the South East, extending into the East Midlands. The proposal for the South West is called the Terminal Control South West (TCSW) Airspace Change Proposal. Currently, all flights from Bournemouth and Southampton follow the same corridor up to the Midlands. The proposed change would, in effect, widen this corridor by creating two new blocks of airspace, roughly 4.5 nautical miles wide. One of these is from Evesham to Faringdon in Oxfordshire (P86), the other is from Andover to Romsey (R41). Planes could fly as low as 5500 feet. Details on http://www.nats.co.uk/text/134/terminal_control_south_west_2.html

- AirportWatch has received a grant from the Ecology Trust to research both the way the number of aircraft will increase in existing airspace and the new airspace that will need to be created across the country if flights increase at the rate the Government expects. Our illustrated report is expected to be published in the late summer.

Useful Info

- If you want a free **daily digest of what is in the papers**, check out Anthony Rae's excellent site www.transportinfo.org.uk
- Remember, if you want help with organising your campaign, **Seeds for Change** offer free advice. Seeds for Change also do direct action training. They provided very useful training for the Heathrow residents who disrupted Douglas Alexander's speech. Contact oxford@seedsforchange.org.uk or check out their website www.seedsforchange.org.uk
- For good legal advice contact the **Environmental Law Foundation**. They will give initial advice free. www.elflaw.org
- If you want to catch up on the latest **direct action** activities, check out Plane Stupid's website on www.planestupid.com

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www.airportwatch.org.uk