



Bulletin No 16

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AirportWatch Stages Successful Conference on Noise and Local campaigning



A glimpse of one of the workshops at the AirportWatch Conference

We want to thank the many people who wrote and emailed us to say how much they enjoyed the AirportWatch Conference held in London in late October. The conference, attended by about 60 people from right across the country, concentrated on noise and local campaigning. Check out the AirportWatch website – www.airportwatch.org.uk – for the background papers produced for the conference. We will be looking to develop our work in a number of areas following the conference. We will do more work on freight. We will concentrate more resources on assisting the campaign groups at the small airports. And we will be lobbying, alongside campaigners in Europe, the European Commission and the European Parliament as they discuss revisions in 2008 to the EU noise directive on noise and airports.

■ A South West branch of AirportWatch has been set up. Although an initiative of the Green Party, it will be a non-party political organisation which brings together a range of airport campaign groups and other local environmental groups in the South West. For more details email Hilary Burn on burnfamily30@hotmail.com

Huge growth at regional airports

The Civil Aviation Authority has reported that the number of passengers using regional airports last year smashed the 100 million barrier. They now account for 42 per cent of air passengers travelling to and from the UK. In Scotland passenger numbers at the five largest airports have risen by 162 per cent in the past 15 years. Edinburgh airport saw the biggest net growth over the period, from 2.5 to 8.6 million.

Flybe announces rise in profits

The Exeter-based low-cost airline Flybe has announced a £20m increase in full-year profits. Passenger numbers have risen from nearly two million to five million in the past five years, with routes increasing from 41 to 125. Flybe operates services from Exeter, Manchester, Birmingham, Southampton, Belfast City, Inverness and Norwich.

Facts and Figures about Flybe

Flybe produces adverts discouraging people to take the train

Flybe exclusively operates short-haul flights, many of them between regional UK airports

Flybe boasts its green credentials

Flybe is virtually single-handedly causing the increasing noise problems at airports such as Exeter and Southampton

Flybe seems to get away with all this because they don't court controversy in the way Ryanair do

Isn't it time to stage a co-ordinated campaign against Flybe?

Government disowns its own noise study

It was the most important study into people's reactions to aircraft noise for over 20 years. It took over 6 years to produce. It cost in excess of £1million. And the Government ended up disowning it.

The ANASE Study was commissioned by the Department for Transport in spring 2001. It was under severe pressure to produce an up-to-date study as the previous one had been published in 1985. Residents were complaining noise was getting worse. They said that the way the Department averaged out noise levels when measuring them didn't reflect the way people heard it, not did it fully take account of the huge increase in the number of planes. Residents also said that noise was a problem at much lower levels, and much further from the airport, than the Department admitted. The Government commissioned the study to prove the residents wrong.

The ANASE Study backed the residents on all their key points. We understand that when MVA, the consultants who produced the report, presented it to the DfT this summer, the civil servants went pale with shock. So, they did their duty – they sat on the study! It was only pressure from London local authorities that forced publication of it a few weeks ago.

It was then that the Department pulled its dirtiest trick. It persuaded the hapless Aviation Minister Jim Fitzpatrick to say that the findings of the study could not be incorporated into government policy-making because some of the peer-reviewers were unhappy about it. He didn't say whether their unhappiness invalidated the report or its key findings, nor why their concerns hadn't been addressed sometime over the past six years. The media had a field day.

The study's two main conclusions were that people start to get annoyed at much lower noise levels than the government previously admitted and that the method of averaging out noise is flawed. The study found that a significant number of people probably start to get annoyed when noise averages out at around 50 decibels rather than the 57 decibels the DfT admits to. Fifty decibels ties in with World Health Organisation findings. It makes a huge difference. According to the DfT only ('only'!) around 275,000 people are disturbed by aircraft noise. ANASE and the WHO say the true number is around 2 million. This story will run and run.

- We hope shortly to produce a short critique of the ANASE Study. Check out www.airportwatch.org.uk

Heathrow expansion consultation launched

By the time you receive this bulletin the consultation into the biggest-ever single expansion at Heathrow will probably have been launched. Ruth Kelly, the Transport Secretary, is expected to launch it on Thursday 22nd November. The Government will ask for views on plans to build a 3rd runway, a 6th terminal and increase the number of planes using the existing runways. If all the plans went ahead, it could result in 800,000 flights a year using the airport (up from 473,000 last year). But the expansion is by no means a done deal. The Government will face huge opposition, not just from local residents' campaign groups, but from all the area's local authorities, most of the area's MPs, large environmental organisations such as Greenpeace and the National Trust as well as the direct action movement.

■ The coalition opposing Heathrow expansion has a new website – www.stopheathrowexpansion.com. It contains a petition against expansion. Sign up!

Stansted: one inquiry after another

The Public Inquiry to significantly increase flight numbers on the existing runway ended in October. A government decision is expected in the first half of next year. Meanwhile, also towards the beginning of next year, BAA is expected to launch its application for a second runway. And, of course, a second Public Inquiry.

■ For details of the Stansted campaign see www.stopstanstedexpansion.com

Climate Change Bill

The Climate Change will be going through this session of Parliament. AirportWatch, through some of our key supporter groups like Friends of the Earth and WWF, will be lobbying for aircraft emissions, currently excluded, to be included in the Bill. Below are details of a rather unusual way you can sign a petition to press for the inclusion of aircraft emissions.



WWF parked this boat and plane on the South Bank Walk near Gabriel's Wharf, London for three days in mid-November. But it's a boat and plane with a difference. Each is covered with signatures! To find out how you can add your signature click [Get on Board](#)

Planning Bill

The other piece of legislation of relevance to AirportWatch going through Parliament is the Planning Bill which aims to confine Public Inquiries to simply looking at the local and regional impacts of proposed developments. We are members of the Planning Disaster coalition which is opposing the Bill.

Greenpeace welcomes Eurostar!



National Climate Change March: 8th December in London

10.00 am Cycle Protest assemblies at Lincoln's Inn Fields. More details [here](#).

11.00 am Service at St Matthews Church, 20 Great Peter Street. See more [here](#).

12 noon Assemble Millbank for main march [Westminster Tube]

2.30 pm Rally at US embassy. Grosvenor Square

Speakers include Chris Huhne MP, Michael Meacher MP, Caroline Lucas MEP, Zac Goldsmith, and George Monbiot.

For more details: www.campaigncc.org

■ Aviation campaigners are looking to meet in one spot. We'll email out details shortly.

From small acorns....

Many of you may never have heard of **Staverton Airport** in Gloucestershire. But the campaigners there may be about to stop the proposed expansion of the runway by thinking the unthinkable. In October they set up their own Climate Camp, the "Camp Hope for Tomorrow". It had a dramatic effect. It grabbed the media headlines, shook the airport management to the core and might result in Tewkesbury Borough Council turning down the expansion application when it considers it later this year. Congratulations to Kevin Lister and his friends!

Stop Press: A new coalition of groups has formed to campaign against a planning application by **City Airport** in London to increase flight numbers from 80,000 as year to 120,000 by 2010 and possibly 170,000 by 2030. More details in the next bulletin.

Useful information

- If you want a free **daily digest** of what is in the papers, check out Anthony Rae's excellent site www.transportinfo.org.uk
- If you want help with organising your campaign, **Seeds for Change** offer free advice. They do direct action training 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

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