

Plane protesters lock down jet with 'human wheel clamp' at City airport



Five protesters in pinstriped suits and bowler hats chained themselves to a private jet at London City Airport on 6th June. Plane Stupid activists used bolt cutters to saw through the perimeter fence by the runway at 2.30am, at a security blind spot. They were found by security guards chained together in a circle around one of the planes. The protest and "human wheel clamp" using arm locks was to highlight the selfishness of private jet use. BizJets jets emit between 5 and 10 times more carbon per passenger than commercial flights. Plane Stupid said it was time these private jets were grounded for good. There is considerable

local frustration that the planning system is failing people of their democratic rights to protect their communities, futures and their environment from 'runaway' airport and flight expansion. Just under a 100,000 residents in east and south east London will be affected by the increasing excessive noise levels from London City Airport upon expansion, and yet less than 10,000 were claimed to have been consulted by the London Borough of Newham. Most will not be entitled to any noise insulation. They will have to live with the consequences every day of their lives, each time a flight takes off and lands. The majority do not have the option to move, and many lived in the area long before the airport's creation.

London City Airport set to up flights by 50%

London City Airport is to be allowed (9th July) to increase its flights by 50% by the end of next year, ahead of the 2012 Olympic Games. The Borough of Newham said it has agreed to raise the number of flights in and out of the airport, located just two miles from the Olympic site, to a maximum of 120,000 per year from the current 73,000. The increase could increase the number of passengers per year to 3.9 million from 3.3 million. The airport is making (probably exaggerated) claims that there may create around 950 new jobs, and could boost the local economy by £26 million. The airport has 10 airlines serving over 30 destinations. BA recently announced (23rd June) the launch of the first transatlantic flights from City Airport. Flights start on September 29. The new all-business class service is a daily return to New York, except Saturdays when London City airport is closed, increasing to 2 flights a day from mid-October. The aircraft Airbus A318 is the largest aircraft that can be flown from City. It is designed for more but fitted with just 32 seats, and has to make a re-fuelling stop in Ireland as it cannot take off from City full of fuel, en route, thereby further increasing the carbon emissions of the trip.

Bristol International Airport planning application for huge expansion



Bristol International Airport has put in for outline planning permission (17th June) for its main expansion, for up to 10 million passengers per year. Plans have been lodged with North Somerset District Council. The expansion involves doubling the terminal area (despite only being a 60% increase in passengers, so they say, by 2019). The airport proposes a new public transport interchange that would sit on top of a multi-storey car park, with covered pedestrian access linking both to the terminal. They plan to add more walkways and extend the one they have only just started

to build (ie. it is now clear that they just cut it down so they could start building earlier in permitted development rights!), extending the car park by 12.5 hectares over green fields to the south etc.

The expansion involves a 40% increase in night flights (50% in summer), at least 2m extra car journeys per year, and a 150% increase in emissions (ie. 2.5 times current levels). This will mean more traffic on country roads, more noise day and night, more countryside eaten up by car parking, and more climate changing impacts. The airport argues expansion will be good for tourism, but between 6 and 10 times as many tourists are outbound rather than inbound, leading to a huge drain from the UK economy each year - and expansion will only make this worse. BIA claim that expansion will create 3500 jobs in the region, but only 900 of these are within the airport and the rest of the jobs appear to be wishful thinking. The outflow of tourism spending destroys far more jobs than this. Even 800 jobs looks high when the expansion is based on no-frills airlines

To mitigate this they are putting in some small wind turbines that will generate 1% of the site's electricity!

Full details are available from our website www.stopbia.com. We have **until 7th August** to tell North Somerset council why this expansion is not needed, and why it is bad for the economy as well as the environment. Please send your comments in now. The best way is via email to biacomment@n-somerset.gov.uk (copying it to email@stopbia.com) quoting reference 09/P/1020/OT2
(from SBAE)

From AirportWatch's Chairman

Times are a'changing for aviation. Just a few years ago an apparently assured aviation industry felt confident that new runways and expanded airports would happen as a matter of course. Now, both the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats have ruled out new runways at Heathrow, Stansted and Gatwick. And the recession has caused a significant fall in numbers at just about every airport. Some of these passengers will return if the economy picks up but it seems unlikely the aviation industry will ever return to its self-confident form of old. Recent figures unearthed by the Guardian journalist George Monbiot - www.monbiot.com - suggests the aviation industry is more dependent on public subsidy than people imagined. He found that during the last 10 years government agencies have spent £80m on helping private enterprise to increase the number of flights, particularly at regional airports. Much of the drive for expansion has come not from the airports or the passengers but from government-funded quangos such as the Regional Development Agencies. With new runways in the South East off the agenda if the Conservatives win the next General Election, all eyes are turning to the level of expansion which might take place at these regional airports (including those smaller airports in London and the South East). George Monbiot's figures show that the real, unsubsidised market for expansion at these airports may be limited. AirportWatch will certainly use his figures as part of our forthcoming work on regional airports, which will be our main focus over the coming months.
(John Stewart 8.7.2009)

EC Funding (£24.3m) for Newquay airport is approved

A £24.3m grant to help redevelop Newquay has been approved by the EC (5th July). Officials said the money, from Cornwall Council, the EU and South West Regional Development Agency, conformed to EU state aid rules. It was approved because the airport's transition from a partial military base to a fully civilian airport (up to 1.4m pax) was deemed beneficial to Cornwall's development. The Commission has already awarded the airport a 22.5m £19m EU grant. Some research by George Monbiot has found that, while ministers have insisted for a long time that the aviation industry is a private industry which pays it's own way, it now emerges that



in fact £80mn of public money is going into expanding the airports.
(6th July <http://www.monbiot.com>)

In addition to the fascinating article by Monbiot there is a table, in the connected Data Blog on the Guardian website. <http://spreadsheets.google.com/ccc?key=rXMbOvAhNoNWyNB1xHdaelw>
It gives all the details of the subsidies by airport, from which development agency, of how much money they had, for what, and in what year. Newquay has already been given a total of £10,284,000 by the South West Regional Development Agency, since 1999.

Heathrow update



Campaigners are becoming increasingly confident that they may have seen off a third runway at Heathrow. Their focus is turning once more to the existing problems caused by the airport. In its Noise Action Plan for Heathrow, published 15th June a 16 week period of public consultation, BAA has been forced to acknowledge for the first time that almost twice as many people are affected by aircraft noise than it previously admitted to. The European Noise Directive has forced BAA to change the way it calculates aircraft noise. As a result, it has found that over 700,000 people are now affected by noise from aircraft flying in and out of Heathrow. Previously, it argued that it was less than 300,000 people. Even so, the new noise contours still barely include Vauxhall in South London, *pictured*. A HACAN survey found that up to 39 planes flew over within an hour, the vast majority of them over 70 decibels. And Vauxhall is 17-20 miles from Heathrow and just a stone's throw from the Houses of Parliament.

Of course the third runway battle is not over until it has been officially dropped. Residents are working increasingly closely behind the scenes with activists from Plane Stupid and elsewhere to build up an effective fighting force should the plans not be dropped. (*John Stewart*)

Gatwick update - Noise Action Plan

GACC has been concentrating on the Noise Action Plan. Under the EU Environmental Noise Directive noise action plans have to be produced this year for all airports with over 50,000 flights a year and the Government have, unbelievably, given the job to the airport operators. We had a pre-view last December because the airport had to produce an embryo noise action plan under a Section 106 agreement with the local councils. We then got involved in pre-consultation meetings with Gatwick Airport Ltd (GAL) - we can't call them BAA any longer because Gatwick may be sold before the Action Plan is finalised. These meetings threw up some important issues on which we obtained useful guidance from DfT and DEFRA.

GAL put their draft Noise Action Plan out for consultation in June - it has some good points but not many. GACC is fortunate that, having been in existence for over forty years, we have built up a loyal membership of around 100 borough, district and parish councils, and local groups, who rely on us for critical but accurate information about the airport. We have sent them a detailed brief (which has been circulated within AirportWatch and in case it is helpful to others, is available on request from info@airportwatch.org.uk) and trust that they will all put in strong responses to the consultation; and we will be putting in our response in due course. If, as is likely, GAL make few changes before submitting the draft to DfT, we (with our local MPs) will aim to persuade DfT to improve it - and that is when similar demands from a number of airport groups are likely to carry most weight - before passing it to DEFRA who are required to submit it to the EU Commission.

A key requirement under the EU Directive is to give an estimate of reduction in the number of people affected by noise as a result of an action plan. GAL seem reluctant to give this figure because we suspect it would expose the fact that their Plan is all fine words and little real action. We will seek to ensure that this legal requirement is enforced. (*Brendon Sewill*)

Noise Action Plans for several airports now out to consultation

Following on from the EU Directive 2002/49/EC, the UK government has devolved authority to produce **Noise Action Plans** to airport operators. Airports with over 50,000 movements a year are required to produce a noise action plan. Member States were required to submit noise maps to the European Commission, using a standard measurement of average noise (55 Lden) across Europe. Previously the Government and the airport used the 57 leq.

At most airports, many people outside the 55 Lden contour are annoyed, so the maps do not show the full extent of the problem. Anyone bothered by aircraft noise should respond to these consultations - even if only with a simple one sentence letter. The policy adopted by the UK Government of making airport operators responsible for the noise action plans is unlikely to produce significant noise reductions. Airports have a clear commercial incentive not to reduce noise. The policy is like putting a burglar in charge of a Bank, or a fox in charge of the henhouse. It is even more ridiculous that the airport operators are given the responsibility of deciding what level of noise is 'acceptable' to the public.

To enable airport operators to produce Action Plans, DEFRA has produced guidance for them. (See 'Guidance for Airport Operators to produce airport noise action plans'). <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/noise/mapping/action-plans.htm>) The timetable for airport operators is for Noise Action Plans to be start the 16 week consultation in July, to finish by 21st Oct 2009. Then on 30th Nov, the Draft Noise Action Plans and accompanying summaries are sent to the Secretary of State for Transport and copied to DEFRA. An action plan produced by an airport is still a draft until adopted by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.



The first action plan – for Heathrow – was produced in early June, with other English BAA airports following on soon afterwards, and East Midlands, Birmingham and Newcastle among others.

There are a lot of generalities in the guidance, eg. “*The Action Plan must be designed to manage noise issues and effects, including noise reduction if necessary*” but there is a total lack of precision where it matters. For example, nowhere is it specified what is “*necessary*”. The EU Directive allows national governments to set noise levels to be achieved by Action Plans, but the UK government has declined to do so. The strongest statements in the guidance that we can find are:

“ .. supports the Government’s aim .. to limit and where possible reduce the number of people in the UK significantly affected by aircraft noise.” (1.02)

“As a first priority, consider what further measures should be taken in areas shown by the noise maps to have residential premises exposed to more than 69 dB LAeq,16h”. (3.12)

The upshot is that, in practice, there is **no firm requirement anywhere to actually reduce noise or to prevent it increasing**. AirportWatch will be holding a meeting on 23rd July, to agree how best to respond to these Noise Action Plans, and give advice to others trying to do so.

(In part from comments by AEF and GACC: See <http://www.aef.org.uk/?p=763> for more info)

Stansted Airport runway inquiry delayed again

A public inquiry into a second runway (G2) at Stansted Airport has been delayed for a second time (18th June), but it is still likely to go ahead - so there's no room for complacency. Communities and Local Government Secretary John Denham said it should be deferred again until the future ownership of the airport was resolved - and it was neither feasible nor realistic to announce the start date for the Stansted G2 public inquiry until the outcome of BAA's appeal, on having to sell Stansted, to the Competition Commission (started in mid May) is known. SSE have now heard that the Competitions Appeal Tribunal has set a date (19 October) for 4 days of hearings of the BAA appeal which means a decision on the sell off is likely by the end of this year. The Stansted G2 inquiry had already been postponed once by Mr Denham's predecessor Hazel Blears over the same issue. The inquiry was first postponed to 15 April 2009, but now it could be delayed until 2010.

Appeal Court refuses to re-open Stansted case

The application by Stop Stansted Expansion to the Court of Appeal, asking it to re-examine the legality of the Government's decision to approve permission for an extra 10 million passengers per annum on the existing runway, was refused on 18th June by Lord Justices. SSE will not seek any further leave to appeal because these respected Appeal Court judges have clarified important aspects of the unsatisfactory original ruling which could have compromised SSE's case at a future Public Inquiry to consider the far bigger issue of a 2nd runway at Stansted. That, of itself, has made the case worth taking to the Court of Appeal. The original ruling implied that:

- * The increase in CO2 and other greenhouse gas emissions, however substantial, could be disregarded in the decision to approve the extra flights;
- * The economic impact on the UK trade deficit, however adverse, could be disregarded;
- * The adverse noise impacts upon local residents and people living further afield could not amount to a reason for refusal because to do so would frustrate Government policy.

SSE is now content that these disregarding these important matters are legitimate considerations for a future Public Inquiry.

Scotland - update from Down2Earth

Scotland this month saw the launch of the new website - www.d2earth.org - to be the centre of community lead group Down2Earth. Soon to be a registered charity, the group hopes to follow in the footsteps of PlaneSpeaking and support empowerment and campaigning in airport affected communities in Scotland. A lot has happened since the workshops that PlaneSpeaking held in Clydebank in Glasgow and Cramond in Edinburgh; the website contains a wealth of grass-roots campaigning tools and will act as a forum and resource for community groups around the country.

Down2Earth have made the site as bright and accessible as possible. The aim of the project is to bridge the gap between the environmental organisations under the AirportWatch Scotland umbrella and the communities affected by airport expansion in Scotland.

The Down2Earth team will be out-reaching the site in order it to mould it to community needs and create a practical national network of groups. By learning from inspirational community lead movements around Heathrow, Down2Earth will assist in creating a powerful voice for people who are ignored in planning and decision making, even as planes roar over their heads. Down2Earth are launching Adopt A Resident Scotland in August - more details in the next bulletin.

www.d2earth.org

(Johnny Agnew, a Down2Earth project coordinator)

Lydd - decision postponement to September - officers recommend refusal

The airport hopes to be allowed to extend its runway and erect new buildings, to enable it to expand to 500,000 passengers per year. Following requests from Lydd Airport, Shepway District

Council has postponed the decision on the future of the airport until September 23rd 2009. The determination was to take place at a full council meeting on July 9th. The Officers Report was published on July 1st, as originally planned. The report recommends that planning permission for both the runway extension and the new terminal be refused, largely as a result of the airport's failure to demonstrate that the development will not have an adverse impact on the protected habitats that surround the airport's runway.

This is an excellent result but the final decision rests with Shepway District Councillors on September 23rd. There could be further delays as both sides have the right to submit additional information which could lead to yet another consultation. Failure to comply with the Habitats Regulations is one of a number of reasons why this planning application should be rejected. In the event of a public inquiry LAAG believes it can demonstrate the validity of these additional factors. *(Louise Barton, Lydd Area Action Group)*

Farnborough applies to double number of movements

The operator of Farnborough Airport - TAG - has submitted an application (15th June) to increase the number of flights from 28,000 a year to 50,000. TAG carried out a public consultation on the proposed increases in January 2009. The current application is almost identical to what it proposed before the consultation. The proposals would also mean an increase in the number of weekend flights from 5,000 and 9,000, and comes after TAG won a battle to go from 2,500 to 5,000 weekend flights in November last year. The local group, Farnborough Area Residents Association, FARA has called on the Planning Authority to reject the application on the following grounds.

Policy The Council had said its planning process would be brought into disrepute should the present limit on aircraft movements be increased before 2011, the year in which the current Local Plan expires. This has turned out to be a prophetic statement. Having identified the risk, it beggars belief that it should be ignored. The public's confidence in the integrity of the planning system may be restored if the application is rejected, and TAG informed that any future application cannot be determined before the Rushmoor Local Development Framework has been established.

Noise Environment There is a need to establish a noise contour budget that is consistent with its purpose - to assure local residents that aircraft noise would be no worse than that resulting from the number of civil movement in 1997, inflated to represent 20,000 movements per annum. At present, there is no reassurance that noise will not increase. There is also no incentive for operators to introduce quieter aircraft.

Third Party Risk Best practice requires the Approving Authority to quantitatively assess the risk, in terms of the probabilities of a given number of people being killed, to demonstrate that the public has accepted that the risk is not intolerable, and then to ensure the risk is kept as low as reasonably practicable when being weighed in the balance with the economic benefits of the airport. There is no evidence in the public domain that Rushmoor has taken any of these steps.

Housing Blight Works on the aerodrome were a prerequisite of a CAA licence being granted, which in turn was a condition of Rushmoor's planning approval for the civil flying at Farnborough. TAG asserts that the works do not represent a scheme under the Lands Compensation Act, by virtue of the occupation of the aerodrome by the MOD at the time the works were undertaken. FARA has been seeking legal advice as to whether the extent to which MOD might be regarded as being in occupation of the aerodrome does preclude the application of the Act.

It is only right that any economic benefits of an increase in the level of flying are not only weighed against the environmental impact of growth, but also offset by the overall loss in the value of the housing stock. There is also the question of being fair to individual householders, who currently face a significant financial loss, and the prospect of further losses should the growth in flying be approved. The public can submit their comments until July 27. Details of the application can be seen at <http://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=8927> *(Geoff Marks - FARA)*

Aviation biofuels protest targets Virgin Atlantic

Nine activists from Plane Stupid and Action Against Agrofuels were arrested gate crashing Virgin Atlantic's 25th birthday party at Heathrow on 24th June, to highlight plans to allow the aviation industry to continue to expand if it uses biofuels instead of conventional aviation fuel. Activists dressed as stewardesses climbed on the entrance of the building and others unfurled banners. Virgin has been an outspoken supporter of biofuels as a "solution" to the steeply rising emissions from aircraft.



The campaigners said Virgin are investing massively in trying to make biofuels work, but biofuels are no way out for the aviation industry. Last year it took 150,000 coconuts to provide just 5% of the fuel for a one-way flight from London to Amsterdam. In reality it will be other vegetable oil blends such as palm oil powering aircraft, but the soaring demand for palm oil is already driving tropical deforestation.

Biofuelwatch commented that all the peer reviewed science indicates that biofuels do not reduce carbon emissions overall. Whether palm oil or 2nd generation biofuels are used, both will still compete for land, so any growth in this industry will add further to the 100 million people already going hungry due to biofuels whilst exacerbating tropical forest destruction and climate change.

Biofuel email action:

Biofuelwatch, and Rettet den Regenwald have produced an email action on biofuels and aviation.

Agrofuels could be used in aircraft within the next 1-5 years, creating yet another market which will cause more climate change, deforestation, evictions and hunger. For the aviation industry, this is another way to continue unsustainable and highly damaging growth – at the expense of climate, communities and biodiversity.

The European Commission has started funding a study into 'alternative fuels for aviation' which primarily means agrofuels (though 'alternative' fuels from coal and natural gas also exist, but these are worse for the climate than kerosene). The aims are to devise a 'roadmap' for their use, and 'informing policy makers' – not to discuss the overall impacts of using even more agrofuels. The study costs the EU 5.1 million Euros and it is entirely run by industry and research institutes with industry links. They will discuss 'environmental and social sustainability' – without even a single civil society organisation being involved, let alone the views of any affected communities being considered. It is coordinated by the French Aerospace Lab, ONERA – hardly experts in agrofuel impacts. The European Commission say on their website that they support 'renewable fuels' for aviation

The email action is to write to Antonio Tajani, (Commissioner for Transport), Andris Piebalgs, (Energy Commissioner) and Stavros Dimas, (Environment Commissioner), expressing disquiet about public EU funds being used for a study to increase the use of biofuels in the aviation industry. The letter (and background explanation) is at

<http://www.regenwald.org/international/englisch/protestaktion.php?id=428>

All eyes now on Copenhagen as high level advisory body fails to agree effective action on aviation emissions

The high level advisory group responsible for drawing up plans to tackle the growth in emissions from international aviation has failed to agree any binding targets for the sector. The Group on International Aviation and Climate Change (GIACC) had been set up by the UN's International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) in an attempt to break years of deadlock over measures such

as international fuel taxes or emissions trading, which could help bring the aviation sector into line with national goals to cut emissions.

In December governments will meet in Copenhagen to try to agree a new global deal on climate change, and ICAO could be in the spotlight for failing to deliver, twelve years after the Kyoto Protocol placed an obligation on developed countries to work through ICAO to limit emissions from international aviation.

While the advisory group's scope was restricted from the start by unambitious terms of reference that talked only of aspirational fuel efficiency targets and frameworks, GIACC's recommendations represent a missed opportunity for ICAO to show leadership. To be effective, a climate strategy for the industry would need a base year for measurement, a target for reduction (in absolute terms) and a global plan for mitigation. However, GIACC's recommendations appear simply to support states taking what they consider to be the most appropriate action - and fuel efficiency goals of 2% per year, which is already almost being achieved. The recommendations clearly fall short of global expectation, and lend credibility to calls by some countries, currently in Bonn for the climate negotiations, to give responsibility for emissions from international aviation to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. (For more info, see AEF at <http://www.aef.org.uk/?p=541>)

Climate Emergency Parliament - at Parliament Square, Wed 15th July at 6.00 pm

Our current parliament is failing to respond to the Climate Emergency. The Campaign Against Climate Change will convene an **alternative parliament** to respond with the degree of urgency required. The Bills before Parliament will include measures for :

- **10% reductions in UK Greenhouse gases by the end of 2010 - A million Green Jobs and emergency insulation program - Banning all domestic flights by the end of 2010 - A 55 mph national speed limit - Halving (on average) the cost of public transport and terminating the roads program.** Come to the People's Parliament! Hear about what we could be doing in the UK now to avert climate crisis - and bring your own ideas ! Speakers include John Stewart. More details at **Campaign Against Climate Change** <http://www.campaigncc.org/>

UK air passenger numbers slump as recession bites - CAA May figures

Transatlantic travel is the biggest victim as the number of people using British airports fell 10%, compared to May 2008. Transatlantic passengers were down 15%. Domestic passengers were down 8.7%. The largest market, from the UK to mainland Europe, fell by 7.3%, although it still accounts for more than half of all air journeys in the UK due to Ryanair and easyJet. In decreasing numbers of passengers, compared to May 2008, Heathrow passenger numbers were down 3.9%; Gatwick down 6.5%; Manchester down 13.7%; Stansted down 18.5%; Luton down 9.8%; Birmingham down 4.8%; **Edinburgh up 1.4%**; Glasgow down 11.7%; Bristol down 16.7%; Newcastle down 7%; East Midlands down 18.5%; Liverpool down 12.1%; and Belfast International down 16.2%. (CAA statistics: www.caa.co.uk/default.aspx?catid=80&pagetype=90)

Useful Info

- For a **daily digest of transport stories in the papers**, with many on aviation, www.transportinfo.org.uk
- Useful information about aviation and its carbon emissions, on the **BBC website**. Entitled "**What's is the real climate impact of flying and what can we do about it?**" Pub facts like: "**One flight to Sydney generates emissions equivalent to driving a mini around the earth 640 times**". See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/bloom/guides/flying.shtml>
- For more information about aviation, and news on aviation stories, see the AEF (**Aviation Environment Federation**) website at www.aef.org.uk and the AirportWatch website.