

May - a month of colourful, creative campaigning around Heathrow!

Sipson is the new Chelsea !

Four guerrilla gardens were created in the villages under threat from a third runway at Heathrow. Residents and activists teamed up under bright bank holiday sunshine to transplant hundreds of plants from this year's Chelsea Flower show, under the expert eyes of a top Chelsea garden designer. By the end of the day, Sipson, Harmondsworth and Harlington were all blooming, in colourful defiance of BAA's plans. There were even Chelsea strawberries and nasturtiums to help residents finish filling the vegetable plots on the **Airplot allotment** as well. Activists and residents of all ages dug shoulder to shoulder determined to make sure that the Chelsea flowers will continue to flourish beyond the time that the third runway plans are but a distant memory. Their beautiful new gardens are a symbol of the life and the resilience of the affected communities that will eventually defeat BAA and the government who have pushed



this expansion. (25th May) <http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/blog/climate/sipson-new-chelsea-20090526>

Richard Briers and Alys Fowler dig in to stop proposed Heathrow runway

Good Life actor Richard Briers and Gardeners' World presenter Alys Fowler joined the fight against a 3rd runway at Heathrow by planting an allotment on the proposed runway site. They joined villagers in planting two Bright Future apple trees and a selection of vegetables from the Heritage Seed Library. The apple trees were selected as a mark of respect to Richard Cox, creator of the Cox's Orange Pippin apple, who is buried in the village churchyard and whose grave may have to be exhumed if the runway plans go ahead. The allotment is about the size of a football field. A joint venture between Garden Organic and Greenpeace aims to make use of the land to grow organic fruit and vegetables for the villagers, who face their homes being bulldozed if plans for a runway are approved. The land in Sipson was bought by Greenpeace in November and is now owned by 45,000 of its members including Emma Thompson, Zac Goldsmith and Alistair McGowan. (12th May).



Activists from Heathrow and 5 other European airports in 'Euroflashmob'



Heathrow

Flash mob protesters descended on Heathrow to sing against airport expansion in a Eurovision-themed demonstration. On the day of the Eurovision song contest, activists wearing bright red 'Stop Airport Expansion' T-shirts gathered at Terminal 1. Emphasising the plight of the villagers of Sipson, protesters at Heathrow performed their own versions of well known and well loved Eurovision golden oldies, including Abba, Cliff Richard and Bucks Fizz and an adaptation of the 1996 hit, "Just a Little Bit", by Gina G.

Waving European flags, they sang: "Ooh ahh - no 3rd runway, ooh ahh, we don't want more, ooh ahh - saving Sipson, It's a fight you can't ignore." Meanwhile similar protests took place at Frankfurt, Amsterdam, Brussels, Dublin and Paris, with hundreds of flashmobbers assembling at the airports for songs, speeches, to the general amazement of the travelling public. (16th May) Photos of all 6 flashmobs are on <http://www.flickr.com/photos/euroflashmob/>

Schiphol



Mock funeral by Heathrow Cherry Lane Cemetery runway protesters



Activists opposed to a 3rd runway at Heathrow held a mock funeral to highlight a cemetery which could be affected. Campaigners fear a dual carriageway may be built through Cherry Lane Cemetery in Harlington to link the planned runway and a 6th terminal. Activists marched from Trafalgar Square to Westminster led by a hearse, and a second event at Harlington. After prayers and blessings, small candles were lit to remember those people who have been laid to rest in the cemetery and to demonstrate that this campaign to save their final resting place lives on. BAA say they have scrapped the plans, but Cherry Lane Against Development doubt the promise. 3.5.2009

STANSTED: Stop Stansted Expansion condemns BAA's plans to delay 2nd runway inquiry as "outrageous and wholly unacceptable"

BAA has written to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Hazel Blears, copied to SSE, asking that the inquiry be deferred pending the outcome of its appeal against the Competition Commission's ruling that it must sell Stansted, and until such time as any future owner's intentions are made clear.

BAA is asking that the Public Inquiry into its plans for a second Stansted runway to be put on hold for what could turn out to be a period of three years, and SSE has condemned this request as outrageous. The delay could mean that a final decision on whether Stansted should be allowed a second runway may not be known until the end of 2014. This assumes an extended period of sale is allowed to BAA, followed by an 18 month Inquiry, six months for the Inspector to produce his report and six months for a decision by Ministers.

It is now almost 7 years since the spectre of major expansion of Stansted was raised by the Government (July 2002), and it is unacceptable that the prospect of another 5 years of blight and uncertainty will hang over local families. Many people have already been living with the threat of compulsory purchase, inhibiting major life decisions such as whether to move home and which school to choose for their children.

SSE feels BAA is trying to have its cake and eat it. The actions of Stansted's owners demonstrate a callous disregard for local communities and a mindset focused only on protecting BAA's commercial interests.

SSE believes natural justice dictates that BAA should not be allowed to keep its options open indefinitely at the expense of the local community. BAA should either proceed with its planning application now or withdraw it altogether. SSE's preference is for the application to be withdrawn but, since BAA is refusing this course of action, the Government should insist that the Inquiry proceeds forthwith. An early Public Inquiry would be a lesser evil than the prospect of five more years of uncertainty.

SSE will be writing to Hazel Blears urging her to reject BAA's request and will be pressing the local authorities to take similar action. SSE is also seeking legal advice, including in relation to the Human Rights Act, on whether BAA can put its planning application into indefinite suspension without regard for the impact this has upon local families in terms of property blight and uncertainty. There is more information (including details of possible outcomes of the Competition Appeal Tribunal) at <http://www.stopstanstedexpansion.com/press367.html>

Aviation campaigning - where we are now, and where we're going: A note from AirportWatch's Chairman, John Stewart

The national picture on aviation has changed significantly since the publication of the Air Transport White Paper in 2003. The industry, together with its supporters within the Department for Transport and elsewhere, were cock-a-hoop. They had a government-authorised vision of a trebling of passenger numbers using UK airports by 2030. There were plans for up to six new runways and the promise that "full use" could be made of existing capacity at airports up and down the country.

Just six years later, their dream lies in tatters. The world has changed. It has become clear that they can't wriggle out of aviation's contribution to climate change simply by introducing inadequate schemes such as the European Emissions Trading System. The industry's dependence on oil has been exposed by the diminishing supply of cheap oil.

Organisations such as BiofuelWatch have shown that biofuels are not the substitute for kerosene the industry has claimed them to be ([Aviation Biofuels - Biofuelwatch briefing March 2009](#).) And the recession has hit aviation hard, with some airlines facing bankruptcy and some airports faced with the prospect of closing down. Moreover, both the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats have made it clear they would scrap plans for new runways at Heathrow, Stansted and Gatwick.

How do we in the AirportWatch network react to this new situation? First of all, by giving ourselves a little pat on the back. A mixture of sound argument (on climate change, noise and economics), together with imaginative and daring campaigning, has played a role in creating this new situation. The industry and government weren't expecting this challenge. And they certainly weren't expected us to remain united when each of our communities faced the real threat of a new or expanded airport. The fact we have done so has been the critical building block which has made everything else possible.

But there is still much to do. With Labour in such dire straits, it seems a racing certainty that they will not be in power after the next General Election. The policy of the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats seems to be to scrap the plans for new runways at Heathrow, Stansted and Gatwick but to allow some expansion elsewhere.

This is the new challenge facing us. I believe it is one we can win. The arguments against expansion at "regional" airports (including the smaller airports within the South East) are strong. Expansion will mean more flights and more noise for local communities, it will add up to a considerable increase in CO2 emissions, but will also harm the local and regional economies – as Brendon Sewill explained in his report, *Airport jobs: false hopes, cruel hoax*, (["Airport Jobs: false hopes, cruel hoax"](#)) the expansion will only result in more money and jobs being taken out of the regions because of the tourist deficit. These are powerful arguments to make. Even more so when we can argue that many of the trips being taken by short haul flights (which are largely responsible for the projected growth) could be done by a faster, more affordable rail service.

AirportWatch will be looking to co-ordinate a campaign around these arguments, working alongside local groups. We need to start this campaign soon so as to make these arguments well before the next election. If you are interested in finding out more about this or playing an active part in the campaign, and haven't already indicated, please contact John Stewart on johnstewart2@btconnect.com

GATWICK: Update from GACC

The Spanish owner of BAA, Ferrovial, decided to sell Gatwick in order to pre-empt the decision by the Competition Commission to force it to do so, and to raise some much needed cash. There were originally said to be six bidders, five faceless foreign consortia plus Manchester Airport Group (which also owns East Midlands, Bournemouth and Humberside). Four or five faceless wonders have dropped out.

At the time of writing we are waiting to see if Gatwick will be sold at a knock-down price or whether the sale will be postponed. BAA have appealed against the Competition Commission decision forcing it to sell



Gatwick, Stansted and either Edinburgh or Glasgow. The Government is thinking of taking power to re-nationalise Gatwick, Heathrow and Stansted if Ferrovial go broke. For the reasons given on our website www.gacc.org.uk we do not see talk of a new runway as a serious threat. The Conservatives, and also the Lib Dems and the Greens, have ruled it out.

Most commentators attributed the expected low price to the world financial situation, but it is not entirely surprising that Gatwick is going cheap. For an international airport it is small - 674 hectares compared with Charles de Gaulle at 3,200 hectares. The buildings, especially the South Terminal, are old and tired. For fifty years bits and pieces have been added on. The two existing runways are too close together to be used at the same time. The layout is convoluted: the proposed site for a new runway would mean aircraft from the existing terminals having to cross the existing runways.

Meanwhile GACC is concentrating on negotiations with BAA on the new noise action plan to be produced under the EU Environmental Noise Directive. We have taken a leading role in two informal working sessions with BAA, and are drawing up a detailed brief for circulation to local councils, environmental groups and MPs - who are all very supportive of GACC - when the formal consultation starts in June/July.

The number of passengers at Gatwick has dropped from 35 million in 2007 to 33 million in the past year. The Gatwick airlines are asking BAA not to go ahead with their expansion plans as they are too expensive and a new owner might have different ideas.

by Brendon Sewill

HEATHROW:

BAA is in such financial trouble, with key business leaders coming out against the new runway, and the Conservatives firming up their position against expansion, it looks increasingly unlikely a 3rd runway will be built, but the campaign goes on to ensure that becomes a certainty.

Business can do without a Heathrow third runway - letter from 13 business leaders

Ministers have claimed for months that the 3rd runway has the solid support of business groups such as the British Chambers of Commerce, CBI and London First. But the CBI is facing a stern test of its authority after its supportive stance on Heathrow's expansion has been undermined by a band of prominent executives. A letter to the Times, on 4th May, signed by 13 top business leaders including Ian Cheshire (Chief Executive, Kingfisher), Russell Chambers (Adviser, Credit Suisse), Jon Moulton (Founder, Alchemy Partners) confirmed it is a misconception that the business community support the Government rationale for a 3rd runway at Heathrow. They say:

"The benefits to business are unclear and unproven. We see little benefit in Heathrow's increased reliance on transfer passengers. A new runway comes with no guarantee of securing a greater number of international destinations or domestic connections. Indeed, the most recent capacity increases at Heathrow that came as the cap on flight movements was raised resulted in exactly the reverse — that is, an increase in the number of frequencies between certain already well-served high-density international city pairs and an overall continued

decrease in the number of destinations served by Heathrow. We have no reason to believe this trend would not simply continue with the addition of a further runway.

"In a recent independent survey of small and large businesses (Continental Research, November 2008), 95% of businesses — said a third runway would make little or no difference to them.

"Alternatives to a third runway have not yet been adequately explored. We cannot accept that the only way to improve the passenger experience of those using Heathrow is to add an extra runway and increase flight numbers massively. Insufficient money has been invested over the past 15 years in transforming the Heathrow infrastructure on the ground to reduce congestion and delays caused by the outdated alignment of buildings, jetties and parking areas. the business case for the third runway simply does not stack up. Moreover, millions of people in the UK oppose the new runway. They are our customers and our colleagues. The business community must take account of the strongly held views of those living in the broader community in which we operate." <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/letters/article6215896.ece>

Heathrow third runway a mistake, says Lord Stern

Lord Stern - one of the government's most senior advisers on the economics of climate change - said if the 3rd runway decision had been properly considered in the light of the UK's climate targets, he thought it would not have been granted, and allowing it is a mistake. He agreed that a government cannot have carbon reduction targets which are reasonably ambitious, and then take a decision like that on Heathrow expansion. Asked if the government had "made a Horlicks" of its decision, Stern said yes, and the debate on the issue had been immature. He said the third runway should have been considered as part of a wider policy for the future of British transport. "I think that [Heathrow] is an example of a major decision that has to be taken in the context of the kinds of carbon policies you've set yourself. I think that, in this case, it was not." <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/may/22/lord-stern-heathrow-third-runway>

Southend - expansion consultation ends, and local council fears "political suicide" if plan is allowed

The London Southend Airport Joint Area Action Plan consultation - on the preferred option of a runway extension of almost 200 metres - finally ended on 15th May. The local group, SAEN, worked tirelessly for months, leafleting thousands of homes and bringing the dangers of the proposals to the attention of residents. Now it seems that councillors at both Rochford and Southend councils have woken up to the fact that there were thousands of objections to the consultation. Protest meetings in Eastwood and Leigh were packed



with objectors worried about noise levels and night flying if the airport is allowed to expand. Both Southend and Rochford Councils backed the airport's expansion plans, but now following the second consultation, sources are claiming it would be "political suicide" to support it, and they realise the massive strength of feeling against the expansion. It is thought likely that opposition parties would oppose the extension, which would leave the Tories isolated. Meanwhile the airport has only managed to state, rather lamely, that the noise levels

from flights transporting 2 million passengers per year would be the same as in 1997, and better than in 1967.

However, SAEN is not celebrating yet, well aware that now Stobart own the airport, they are not likely to give up easily. "The price of tranquility is eternal vigilance". Whether or not Southend airport manages to lay on more enticing holiday destinations for the local residents, it was noted that in a statement made by the company's chief executive Andrew Tinkler, speaking in October 2008, said the firm is evaluating the possibility of replicating its Widnes 3MG (Mersey Multi-Modal Gateway) distribution complex at the new London Gateway container port at Shellhaven. Once finished, the site will be one of the UK's largest container ports, with Europe's largest distribution park alongside. Tinkler says Stobart is "keen to get involved" with the project. <http://saen.org.uk/>

Leeds-Bradford airport £70 million plan back to the drawing board

Plans for a £28m extension at the terminal have been scuppered for the time being. Councillors unanimously agreed to delay a decision on the scheme amid concerns about the impact it could have on roads in the area, and transport links to Leeds, after getting more than 900 letters of objection. A vigorous campaign has been run locally, by Friends of the Earth, Rising Tide, Stop Climate Chaos and others, within the No Leeds Bradford Expansion Campaign.



The proposed terminal extension is part of a £70m investment programme that Bridgepoint Capital - the airport owners - intend to carry out over the next 5 years. They want to increase passenger numbers to 5.1 million a year by 2016. The councillors indicated broad support for improvement of the terminal, but criticised the airport's transport blueprint for failing to tackle key issues. Panel members said they could not give the scheme their backing at this stage. (17th April)

<http://www.leadstidal.org/nolbaexpansion/>

Update from East Midlands Airport

1) Proposed EMA 190m Runway Extension - Determination by the planning authority was threatened for March 2009 (application first submitted in 2000), with the persistent rumour that no noise control conditions would be attached. At environmental lawyer Richard Buxton's instigation, a number of local amenity groups plus LADACAN (Luton), met with him in February to discuss aircraft night noise problems. A letter seeking proper environmental assessment was subsequently despatched by RB to North West Leicestershire DC, also noting the possibility of a 110 hectare strategic distribution centre adjacent to the airport. The planning decision has been deferred until mid-year.

2) 'Carbon Neutral' Airports - Based on CPRE Leicestershire's estimate of aircraft CO2 emissions at EMA, using 2006 fuel sales data obtained via the airport's consultative committee, a note has been prepared to counter the corresponding claims (*'Carbon Neutral Lite ?'*).

3) Ryanair Job Claims: Press Complaints Council (PCC) - Ryanair have been claiming recently that their 2 million passengers at EMA support 2,000 jobs locally, which is doubted. A complaint was submitted to the PCC, arguing the lack of relevance of '1000 jobs per mppa' to incremental growth and also citing Brendon Sewill's *'Airport jobs: false hopes, cruel hoax'* (AEF, March 2009). The PCC assisted in obtaining a correction via the Nottingham Evening Post.

4) European Commission (Directive 85/337/EEC): Lack Of An Environmental Statement For The Previous EMA (610m) Runway Extension - This first surfaced in the mid-1990s, and again in the Court of Appeal in 2000, but seems to have been without a convincing explanation ever since. The same directive - enacted as *The Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988* - was cited by the Secretary of State in 1997, requiring an Environmental Statement for a planning application for subsequent, but smaller, runway extension. Several fruitless lines of enquiry were pursued last year, leading to a complaint to the European Commission. from DEMAND

Government paves way for 400m runway extension at Birmingham Airport

The Secretary of State has decided not to intervene in Solihull council's decision to grant planning permission for the runway extension, to accommodate long-haul flights. This means that subject to the signing of legal agreements with the airport the plans will have the full go ahead. (8th May).

Report from a new initiative in Scotland

AirportWatch Scotland has been working on an exciting new project - our new environmental community support group raises its head next month. Following in the footsteps of Plane Speaking, **Down2earth** is a community lead group set up to provide resources, information and support to communities affected by airport expansion. In early June, we launch an interactive resource website www.down2earth.org.uk. The website provides information for those concerned about the damaging effects of aviation and what is going on at their local airport. It provides resources for new and existing groups to aid them in resisting airport expansion, and creates an online space for such communities to discuss and plan with each other and also network with similarly affected groups around Scotland. We hope that communities surrounding the main Scottish airports, including Cramond and Kirkliston in Edinburgh, Clydebank and Paisley in Glasgow and Dyce in Aberdeen will be among those to benefit from the new group and site. "We hope that people will chat about their experiences on the website forums," said Kris, one of the designers. "People can see news on their airport such as expansion plans, and also what other community groups are doing to combat air and noise pollution."

Down2earth are attending a public meeting on the 16th June at 7pm in Cramond Kirk Hall. The meeting will feature John Stewart, author of "Rail First", a new report highlighting the potential of high-speed rail to replace many of the short distance flights using Scotland's airports, to be published on the 15th June. More than half the flights using Edinburgh and Glasgow airports are to other destinations in the UK. Many of these could be done by a fast, affordable train service. We hope that this will be a catalyst for community groups around Scotland to contribute their voices in the call for a viable transfer from air to rail travel and provide a starting point for groups to organize their resistance.

We are very excited about our new approach to engaging the communities affected by airport expansion. We hope that **Down2earth** will provide the resources needed for these communities to simply and effectively communicate with each other, make their voices heard and successfully organize their resistance.

by Juliana Napier

Bristol - about to happen soon?

Bristol airport is still to submit plans for its expansion (10 million pax by 2016 compared to 6.2 million in 2008, and a 45% increase in passenger flights). They gave delayed this by several months, we presume because they want to win round more supporters but also they may have been distracted by the rumours (or truth?) of their majority owners putting them up for sale. In the meantime we have succeeded in getting both Bristol and B&NES councils to pass motions (both sabotaged by the Tories, but still with useful elements) that cast doubt on the merits of expansion.

Last week we were allowed to present to North Somerset council for the first time (after 4 years!) and the CBI and Chambers of Commerce gave the pro-expansion view. Very striking that neither of them gave any substantive or quantitative evidence, whereas we gave loads. However the viewpoint of the councillors was evident in many cases and therefore "the CBI said it therefore it must be true" philosophy was clear!

It looks like the planning applications will go in by the end of May and we will then have 6 weeks to deluge the council with objections (any help or funds to help this gratefully received!). We hope to get 7000 or more objections this time ... Please register at www.stopbia.com to keep in touch.

by Jeremy Birch

CAA figures for April 2009 compared to April 2008

Airport terminal passengers for all UK reporting airports that have submitted figures so far (27th May) for April show numbers were **down 4.6% compared to April 2008**, to 18,083,834 (there were 16,645,749 passengers in March, down 13.9% on March 2008). Easter was in March 2008 but in April 2009, which accounts for the smaller fall. <http://www.caa.co.uk/default.aspx?catid=80&pagetype=90> Figures below show the number of passengers and the % change between April 2008 and 2009, for the UK's largest airports. Heathrow, Edinburgh, Birmingham, Belfast City and Humberside managed to grow.

Heathrow	5,612,796	+ 2.6%			
Gatwick	2,577,858	- 3.0%	Belfast Cty	219,264	+ 1.7%
Stansted	1,629,264	- 12.6%	Leeds Bradford	190,568	- 6.9%
Manchester	1,454,768	-5.2%	Prestwick	161,657	- 19.1%
Luton	787,908	- 4.0%	Southampton	150,358	-13.4%
Edinburgh	752,152	+ 3.9%	Jersey	119,325	- 9.7%
Birmingham	716,965	+ 1.5%	Cardiff	118,032	- 10.7%
Glasgow	569,428	- 11.6%	Guernsey	70,232	- 26.0%
Bristol	416,965	- 15.1%	Bournemouth	70,232	- 26.0%
Liverpool	415,034	- 6.8%	Exeter	64,528	- 11.7%
East Midlands	375,207	- 16.6%	Doncaster	63,888	- 14.6%
Belfast Internat	369,082	- 1.8%	Isle of Man	58,190	- 9.7%
Newcastle	330,729	- 7.0 %	Inverness	51,290	- 1.8%
Aberdeen	248,594	- 11.1%	Norwich	31,413	- 29.2%
London City	240,225	- 19.4%	Humberside	27,120	+ 9.3%

Peel want to sell 49% of their share of Doncaster Robin Hood Airport

Robin Hood Airport's owner - Peel Airports Group - wants to sell a significant stake - but say they remain "fully committed" to the airport. They have appointed Rothschilds to try to sell 49% of the business. Passenger numbers fell, in relation to 2008, by 16.4% in April, fell 14.9% in March, 22% in February, and 16% in January. Air freight was down 16% last year, compared to 2007. The airport's chief executive said they are still "committed to creating up to 17,000 new jobs by 2030". The airport is currently trying to get a variation to the provisions of the Quiet Operations Policy of the Section 106 Agreement to permit it to operate QC4 aircraft between the hours of 11.00 pm and 0700 am, for air cargo. The airport considers that the current restrictions are impeding development of freight and cargo services to the economic detriment of Doncaster. The local group, Finningley Airport Network (FAN) have been opposing this strenuously.

Yorkshire airports expansion 'could cost over 55,000 jobs'

Campaigners say expansion of 3 Yorkshire airports will cost the region's economy £2bn in lost tourism revenue and tourism jobs. FoE say increased traffic from the airports will mean money will be spent by UK residents overseas instead of in the region, and could prevent the creation of over 55,000 new tourism jobs in Yorkshire. They are calling on Councils to refuse expansion at Leeds Bradford, Doncaster and Humberside airports. FoE's Simon Bowens said: "Leeds City Council must reject airport expansion and promote sustainable tourism instead. This will keep money in the region and prevent dangerous rises in greenhouse gas emissions – helping to move the UK towards prosperous low carbon economy." (15th April)

Writetothem.com - useful website giving contact details of your local politicians

Contact the decision-makers. Find the right person to talk to in seconds on <http://www.writetothem.com/> - a fantastic campaigning website. Just type in your postcode and the site brings up a list of your local, district, MP and MEP councillors and contact details for them. It's also packed with useful hints and tips on getting your message across, and what you should expect.

Useful Info

- For a **daily digest of transport stories in the papers**, with many on aviation, www.transportinfo.org.uk
- For more information about aviation, and news on aviation stories, see the **Aviation Environment Federation** (AEF) website at www.aef.org.uk and the AirportWatch website www.airportwatch.org.uk
- AEF has an excellent advice on planning issues in relation to airports, at <http://www.aef.org.uk/?cat=8>
- For legal advice contact the **Environmental Law Foundation**. They give initial advice free. www.elflaw.org
- To find out how to buy a little piece of land at Sipson, as part of the **Greenpeace Air Plot** scheme, see <http://www.airplot.org.uk> - 45,446 people have become beneficial owners so far! (up from 41,360 in mid April).

Bulletin compiled by Sarah Clayton - with thanks to many contributors

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www.airportwatch.org.uk