

A Critical Summer

It may seem all quiet on the aviation front right now (except for those planes roaring over our heads!) but this summer is a critical one for the future of aviation. It is the period when both the Government and the Labour Party will be putting in place the key first building blocks of aviation policies.

The Government is consulting on its Aviation Scoping Document which will provide the foundation for its policy on aviation. Labour is revising its aviation policy as part of a wider policy review. AirportWatch, along with its supporter groups, will be providing input to both the Government and the Labour Party consultations. Our conference on 18th June will focus on the Scoping Document.

The victories against new runways at Heathrow, Stansted and Gatwick may mean that it is going to be very difficult for any government to promote new runways in the future. That is certainly the view of sections of the aviation industry. But what we will have to fight is the incremental growth in flights at airports across the country.

It reminds me very much of the aftermath of the momentous campaign against new roads in the 1990s in which I was involved. It did mean that, for the most part, major new roads through pristine countryside or in urban areas, were off the agenda. It did not mean that traffic levels on the existing roads were curtailed. We failed to halt the incremental increase in traffic. The result is that our cities, towns and many of our villages are overrun by cars.

Our challenge as aviation campaigners is to fight to curb the number of flights using our airports. It will not be easy. In many ways, it will be harder than winning set-piece battles against new runways. To do so, we need not just to fight on an airport-by-airport basis, but also to find a unifying theme to make it a national battle. I'm not sure we have really found that yet.

John Stewart - Chair AirportWatch

"Flying Matters" crashes as members fall out

Pro-aviation lobby group Flying Matters has been dissolved after key members quit. Their website no longer exists. It disbanded in April after BA, Virgin Atlantic, BAA and MAG decided to form their own group. Virgin and EasyJet disagree on APD, with easyJet wanting a per-plane tax instead, which would suit them (but not airlines like BA or Virgin) or lower APD on short flights (not surprisingly as that is what they do) and Virgin wanting lower APD on long haul flights. The industry is split on what to lobby for on APD.

Flying Matters' director Brian Wilson was asked the basic question "why should there be a freedom to fly?" Christian Wolmar reported that: "All he could do was bluster that people had come to expect their two weeks on the Costa del wherever. I should have responded that the Victorian middle classes expected to pay very little for child chimney sweeps to risk their lives cleaning out their flues. Flying Matters carried little weight of influence, and any future lobbying group is expected to be formed around a more focused alliance. "Vital is the selection of the individual to lead such a coalition, common consensus being that British aviation is currently lacking such a person." 11.4.2011 <http://bit.ly/jnVYQx>.

Birmingham Airport runway extension expected to start in 2012 and be ready by 2014

The airport agreed, at a board meeting, to go out to tender for its runway extension and is confident the £65 million project will be started in 2012 and completed by the end of 2014. It hopes to then be able to offer non-stop flights to China, India and the west coast of America. The Government's Regional Growth Fund has allocated £15.7 million for upgrading the A45, which is about half of the £32 million cost. Chris Crean, from West Midlands FoE said the airport is only going to pay a paltry £7 million and should pay more. "The only reason the A45 needs realigning is to enable the runway extension to proceed." There is the wild claim that the project "promises to create up to 3,400 new jobs and deliver a £631 million boost to the local economy." From previous experience elsewhere, this figure is wildly over optimistic. The A45 issue raises a number of environmental concerns, largely around the extra emissions caused by the aircraft movements and people travelling to and from the airport, but also because the Chamber of Commerce have been talking up the M42 corridor (the A45 crosses the M42 close to the airport)



as a growth area, with plans for labelling parts of it as an "Enterprise Zone" or "Belt". There are good arguments why it would be preferable for Birmingham City Centre to be an Enterprise Zone, rather than one close to the airport, which is not readily accessible by public transport and is in the green belt, rather than utilising brownfield land. FoE fears that the A45 and airport scheme is the start of "open season" on greenfield land adjacent to the motorway network. 20.4.2011
<http://bit.ly/izlrc8> Birmingham FoE page on M42 <http://bit.ly/m6Y6M5>

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Birmingham airport aspiration to be a major air transport hub

Birmingham airport is being promoted as the solution to capacity constraints as the government seeks to rebuff criticism that it lacks a coherent aviation policy. There is pressure to build more airport capacity in the south although there is enough already. Philip Hammond was present at the opening of the latest phase of the redevelopment of the airport, and said Birmingham would become an even more important part of the UK national airport infrastructure. Hammond also said another key aspect of the transport strategy would be the development of HS2 rail link which will pass within a kilometre of the airport and will whisk passengers direct from London to the airport in around 35 minutes – roughly the time it takes commuters to travel from the centre of London to Gatwick. 16.5.2011 <http://bit.ly/jSJk60>

New law enables Met Police to recover London City Airport security cost

New legislation, under the Policing and Crime Bill, could mean the Met Police can recoup some of the cost of securing the airport. Changes instituted on April 1 mean the onus is now on UK airports to fund policing, which at London City is estimated to cost around £5.7 million this year. London City would not comment on how much of the bill it will pick up, citing confidentiality over security. Opponents have long argued it is unfair for the taxpayer to pay for policing a privately-owned airport. It was revealed in 2008 that the Metropolitan Police spent £24 million policing London City Airport over the previous 5 years (£5.8 million in 2008). In 2008 the Met spent £196 million on policing Heathrow over the preceding 5 years. But unlike at London City Airport, the Police Service recovers around 70% of the Heathrow cost. London City Airport claimed they made £50 million profit last year, so they could afford to pay for their own policing costs. 4.5.2011



<http://bit.ly/1DzhKm>

Controversial planning document could pave way for Belfast City Airport runway extension

Local residents have expressed their alarm at a draft planning policy document - the Draft Planning Policy Statement 24: Economic Considerations – which could pave the way for George Best Belfast City Airport to be permitted its long-sought runway extension. It states that the economic implications of a proposed development can, where significant, be the determining factor in approving a planning application - which would shift the goal posts in favour of the airport. If so, environmental concerns would be brushed aside. Belfast City Airport Watch (BCAW) says this is nothing more than a charter for developers. Planning applications are already difficult enough for ordinary people to challenge – this policy guidance, with its emphasis on claimed economic benefits, would make the cost of mounting a challenge prohibitive in many instances. 3.5.2011 <http://bit.ly/1EJWcn>

Following the recent Northern Ireland Assembly election earlier this month, there is now a new Environment Minister, Alex Attwood, from the SDLP. BCAW are hoping he will ensure there's no further expansion at City Airport, and that he'll work to achieve a better quality of life for residents by instituting and enforcing robust noise controls.

The Belfast City Airport Judicial Review hearing on 13th – 15th June inclusive

The rival Belfast International Airport is seeking a judicial review of the decision to remove the annual seats for sale restrictions at Belfast City Airport. BCAW has also issued similar proceedings. Their lawyers claim the Minister, Edwin Poot's, decision is unlawful and that he should abide by his department's own planning restrictions. They also contend that he failed to take into consideration environmental information. A further ground of challenge is that the seats restriction was removed without checking whether there was an effective noise control system and an improved noise management system in place at Belfast City Airport. <http://bit.ly/1GruUE>

Also Inquiry

The Northern Ireland Department of Environment called for new inquiry in April. 19.4.2011 (BCAW). It has submitted a new request for a public inquiry into plans to extend the runway. The Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) refused to proceed with an inquiry last year. It wanted the department to produce more detailed environmental information about the likely noise impacts. It is not clear when the inquiry will begin but **a preliminary meeting will be held in June.**

Fight against Bristol airport's expansion plans is far from over as the application for Judicial Review goes to the High Court

Stop Bristol Airport Expansion (SBAE) say the fight against the airport's £150 million expansion plans is far from over. They made the announcement as they are submitting a request for a Judicial Review to take their case to the high courts. Their lawyers are confident there is a strong case against the airport's plans, which would see it nearly double in size, with nearly double the CO2 emissions, and with serious traffic and noise impacts for local communities and the environment.

The SBAE case concentrates on the economic case and the validity of the previous Government's policy on airport expansion, on which Bristol Airport's plans are based and which the Coalition has recently clearly said it opposes.

Jeremy Birch, a spokesman for SBAE said: "The Government has just published the first stages of a consultation on its new airports policy, admitting that Labour's 2003 Air Transport White Paper was fundamentally flawed and gave too little weight to climate change and local environmental

impacts including noise. It has condemned the previous policy as 'fundamentally out of date' and having 'got the wrong balance'.

“We have been right all along to argue against the huge increase in carbon emissions and noise that will result from the Airport’s proposals which are completely unjustified. Despite its claims for growth in passengers, its 2010 numbers (5.72 million) are much lower than in 2007 (5.89 million) and half a million less than its peak in 2008 (6.23 million). [CAA passenger data <http://bit.ly/jhvocf>]



Bristol Airport's expansion plans for new 5-storey car park, expanded terminal etc

“Claims to be essential to local business are also a fantasy as the Airport’s own figures show business passengers, already able to connect to anywhere in the world, would have dropped to only 10% in 2019, compared with 20% in 2005.”

Transport Secretary Phil Hammond condemned Labour’s 2003 Aviation White Paper, on which Bristol Airport’s planning permission was based, as “fundamentally out-of-date” at the launch of the Government’s Scoping Document, which marks the start of the process for drawing up a new aviation policy. He said the previous government had “got

the balance wrong” because it failed to give enough weight to climate change and the local environmental impacts of aviation.

Hammond described climate change as “one of the gravest threats we face” and has thrown out a challenge to the aviation to get its noise and emissions under control in order that it can grow within a “genuinely sustainable framework”.

Bristol Airport plans to grow from 6 million passengers to 10 million by 2019. It was given the go-ahead for the expansion 12 months ago by North Somerset Council. Stop Bristol Airport Expansion, a coalition of local residents and environmental groups, has been fighting Bristol Airport’s plans for nearly six years. No expansion has taken place so far. 26.4.2011

www.stopbia.com and <http://bit.ly/kuz9fY>

Rising debt forces Newcastle airport sale

Newcastle airport has been put up for sale as the local authorities that control it look to reduce ballooning debts, according to the Sunday Times. The seven local authorities, which own a 51% stake in the airport, have appointed KPMG to advise them before debt repayments are due. A £320 million repayment is due in December 2013 on a loan the airport took on in 2006. Copenhagen airports, which owns the remaining 49%, is also keen to sell. At its peak there were 5,624,000 passengers in 2007 but only 4,346,500 in 2010 - a fall of 29%. 17.4.2011 <http://bit.ly/iLQyg3>

Plymouth City Airport to close in December

Plymouth City Airport is to close in December. Its owner, Sutton Harbour Group, blamed the economic downturn and "challenges for the UK regional aviation market". It said the airport, which employs 56 people, had suffered "significant losses in recent years" and was facing a £1m loss over the next year. The Sutton Harbour Group took over operation of the airport in 2000 and launched Air Southwest in 2003. New destinations were added including London City Airport, Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle, Glasgow, Cork and Grenoble. Southwest was sold to Eastern International Airways in November 2010 and loss-making routes, including London Gatwick, were

axed - with the Gatwick flight cut in February 2011. After that fewer than 100 people were flying out of Plymouth every day. 28.4.2011 <http://bit.ly/m8nNg3>

Idling airplanes produce more harmful pollution than previously thought

Researchers have shown that the emissions produced by aircraft idling on the ground contain tiny oil droplets, that when exposed to sunlight, undergo a chemical reaction that causes them to solidify into tiny particles that can infiltrate the lungs and eventually the brain of those living or working near airports.

The researchers collected samples of exhaust from an idling KC-135 military cargo plane, into large Teflon coated bags, and exposed that exhaust to sunlight and/or UV light to initiate photo-oxidation (when a polymer surface degrades in oxygen or ozone). They say that in contrast, exhaust emissions from airplanes running at speed, such as when in-flight, tend to be mostly comprised of solid particles, which would not be affected by sunlight in the same way. It is not clear whether there would be the same finding from exhaust from more modern engines. Little has been done to reduce the amounts spewed into the environment, or study the effect of temperature or interactions of pollutants with UV radiation or other substances. 12.5.2011 <http://bit.ly/likwXD>

Heathrow Airport villages 'dying due to buy-up scheme'

Villages around Heathrow are "dying" because of a home buy-up scheme run by the airport operator BAA, according to local MP, John McDonnell. BAA stepped in to buy 266 "un-sellable" houses when planning for a 3rd runway, and 8 more sales are going through. John said despite the plans being scrapped many of these homes were standing empty leading to the "death of village life". Others are let to short term tenants. Many homes bought by BAA have just been left empty, and though BAA has said they are being refurbished with a view to being let, the process is extremely slow. People living in the villages of Sipson, Harmondsworth, Harlington, Cranford and Longford, among others, live under continuing fear of plans for a 3rd runway coming back. 5.5.2011 <http://bbc.in/mrT05d>

At Southend SAEN appeals against Judicial Review decision and the Ecclesiastical Court ponders the loss of 38 metres of church wall

On legal advice, Stop Airport Extension Now (SAEN) is to appeal the decision of Deputy High Court Judge Waksman QC in refusing permission for a Judicial Review into the Southend runway extension.

The Judicial Review (JR) application is currently in the same position that a similar JR relating to Carlisle Airport was last year. That JR went forward after appeal <http://bit.ly/k3KboX> and was successful in quashing planning permission. <http://bit.ly/iCyRu3> Carlisle Airport is also owned by Stobart and SAEN is using the same barrister who won in the Carlisle case.

Though the person pursuing the case has had to stand down due to a change in personal circumstances, another SAEN member has stepped forward to take her place. The Council has been concerned about their costs. But Denis Walker, representing SAEN, says the £35,000 is less than half what they paid for covering Southend's lamp posts in 'Better Southend' signs and a tiny fraction of the amount they have given Stobart.

There are five other ongoing legal actions related to the extension of the runway at Southend Airport. One is a separate Public Inquiry, called by the Government in February into plans to divert part of Eastwoodbury Lane as part of the runway extension. This was on 10th-11th May and the inspector will report to the Secretary of State. No decision is anticipated for several months.

Others deal with a variety of issues, from the European Commission examining the whole plan to the threat to part of a church wall. <http://bit.ly/IJ7hGm> 22.4.2011

On 5th May, an Ecclesiastical Court hearing began, about whether a 38 metre section of the late Victorian boundary wall around St Laurence and All Saints Church, in Eastwoodbury Lane, Eastwood, should be removed and rebuilt elsewhere to allow for the extension of the runway.

The hearing was called by George Pulman QC, Chelmsford's ecclesiastical judge, after nine people wrote objecting to the plans. Alastair Welch, managing director of the airport, told the hearing he believed noise from the airport and aircraft would be the same to the church if the runway is extended or not. If permission to remove the section of wall is refused, it could scupper plans to extend the runway. Mr Welch has stated in court that the runway extension could not proceed without the demolition of the section of wall, for safety reasons. The hearing was adjourned so more information could be obtained. 6.5.2011 <http://www.saen.org.uk/?s=ecclesiastical>

Depressed in Barcelona

How can anybody be depressed in Barcelona? It is one of the world's finest cities. Beautiful boulevards. Splendid buildings. Wonderful beach. Great weather. A truly vibrant atmosphere. Yet, I became deeply depressed when I visited it last week.

I was speaking at a meeting organized by Pro Soroll, the residents' campaign group at Barcelona Airport. Most of Barcelona is not overflowed by aircraft as the planes land and take off as far as possible over the sea. But the areas which are overflowed can get a plane every three or four minutes. It is a hard one for the residents to fight. The authorities regard the airport as critical to the mass tourism which boosts the economy of the region. 6

And that's why I became so depressed. Hordes of tourists strolling up and down the boulevards (largely looking at other tourists) or eating and drinking in the bars and cafes. Gordon Brown's 'hard working British families' enjoying a weekend abroad thanks to budget flights. But there is no getting away from it: their enjoyment comes at the expense of the residents under the Barcelona flight path and under the flight paths of their home city: Manchester, Liverpool, London, Glasgow.....Look at the video of the impact of cheap flights on the low-income residents of Clydebanks in Glasgow <http://youtu.be/7XvdP85hRHM>

Can the freedom to have a beer in Barcelona justify their misery? I'm not sure it can. And I haven't yet mentioned the damage all this flying is doing to our planet. On the train home I became convinced that we have to challenge head-on the view that a cheap holiday by budget airline for the many justifies misery for the few. On a global scale, it's not true, of course, as only 5% of the world's population have ever flown.

But the real danger is that, if it becomes accepted wisdom, there will be no incentive on anybody to seriously look at other ways of providing cheap holidays. The potential of rail, for example, will remain unexplored. And that would be truly depressing.

John Stewart - Chair AirportWatch

Campaigners step up Dunsfold Park fight due to threat of unrestricted flights

A warning 'wake-up' call has been issued to all Waverley residents to act now to stop Dunsfold Airport. Dunsfold Park - which earlier sought to become an eco-town, but was refused planning permission - currently has a cap of 5,000 annual aircraft movements. But now a claim for a Lawful Development Certificate (LDC) has been submitted by Rutland Group, the operator of Dunsfold Airport, for future UNRESTRICTED aviation use of Dunsfold Airport. Owners hope to reactivate

the underlying aviation consent to make it commercially viable. If this claim for a Lawful Development Certificate is approved, all of the towns and villages in the area will suffer from dramatically increased aircraft noise and quality of life will be severely and adversely affected. There could be as many as 40,000 annual movements, though this would not include commercial flights. FoE have produced a good briefing on what it means, and what needs to be done. Dunsfold have got top planning lawyers, who won at Farnborough, to make their case. A new local group, Stop Dunsfold Airport Action Group, has been set up and produced its first newsletter. The deadline for comments on the LDC claim was 20th May, and a decision is expected on 29th May. <http://bit.ly/kVNLG1>

EMA wind turbines to produce a tiny amount of the airport's electricity

Another in a line of airport greenwash. East Midlands has unveiled two wind turbines which will now generate all of 5% of the airport's electricity demand. Naturally, in relation to the carbon emissions that the planes using the airport produce, it is less than a drop in the ocean. However, every tiny bit helps sort of. By comparison, (figures from local campaigners at East Midlands) it is estimated that planes flying to and from East Midlands airport produce around 0.6 million tonnes [= 600,000 tonnes] of CO2 per annum - based on the amount of aviation turbine kerosene dispensed at EMA.6

300 tonnes CO2 (saved by the turbine) is thus around 0.05% of the emissions that the airport is responsible for, taking flights into account. The turbines have been passed by the CAA for safety. EMA also now has a biomass boiler and a willow farm. 11.5.2011 <http://bit.ly/kZ7hD8>

Have your say on new Heathrow airport consultation on noise mitigation

On 9th May BAA launched a consultation on Heathrow's noise mitigation scheme. Local communities are being asked to mobilise to seek major improvements to the company's proposals. This is part of BAA's Noise Action Plan. It appears that BAA's proposals will leave everyone living around the airport with a noise mitigation scheme that is seriously inferior to those which apply around many comparable airports in the UK and the rest of the world. Campaign group HACAN has welcomed the fact that more people will be entitled to compensation and mitigation under BAA's new scheme. But it argues that the scheme still does not reach everybody disturbed by aircraft noise. Under the new scheme BAA is preparing to extend the area where people are entitled to help with moving house if they want to escape the noise. It is also proposing to help more people pay for double-glazing. It is more generous than before, which is welcome, but it will still leave a lot of people under the flight paths disappointed that they will not be entitled to help. 10.5.2011 The consultation closes on 1st August. Details at <http://bit.ly/knorZt>

Lydd Airport Inquiry resumes: Dungeness as a Fukushima in the making?

The public inquiry into Lydd Airport's expansion plans resumed on 10th May after the Easter break. Lydd Airport Action Group's nuclear expert, Chartered



Consulting Engineer John Large, presented evidence on nuclear safety case. He is one of four experts engaged by LAAG to demonstrate that it is inherently unsafe for a regional airport to be developed beside a nuclear power station complex. The LAAG case is that Lydd's **expansion would** introduce a step change in the probability of a major nuclear accident since large aircraft, such as Boeing 737s, will be taking off and landing close to the Dungeness site. Mr Large says that

even though he believes the reinforced concrete vessel of each reactor at Dungeness B would most likely withstand an aircraft crash, subsidiary equipment failures caused by the crash could lead to a very significant radiological release, mirroring the situation at Fukushima. At Fukushima a complete loss of power and auxiliary service water supply which occurred after the tsunami was what triggered the radiological release. The nuclear regulator the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII) is looking at the 'lessons to be learned' from Fukushima which requires it to re-evaluate the way in which it views this kind of accident. <http://t.co/n0ug8aI>

LAAG has a Facebook page, which is regularly updated with news from the Inquiry. <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Lydd-Airport-Action-Group-LAAG/393524244539>

This comes soon after the latest draft of the stress test criteria – drawn up by the Western European Nuclear Regulators Association

Nuclear power stations: Another safety exemption for aviation?

Europe's nuclear power plants would not have to prove their ability to withstand the force of an aircraft crash under stress tests being drafted by regulators. The FT has reported that the possibility of a plane collision was the most glaring omission among scenarios laid out in a proposal for the stress tests, the centrepiece of the EU's plan to ensure the safety of its 143 nuclear plants after Fukushima. Natural disasters have to be taken account of. Non-nuclear Austria, various green groups and some members of the European Parliament are adamant that 9/11-style plane strikes must be included if the tests are to be sufficiently credible to allay concerns. But other member states, principally France, see the measure as excessively burdensome, fearing it could force the closure of plants that would otherwise be deemed fit for operation. 7.5.2011 (AEF) <http://www.aef.org.uk/?p=1246>



Coventry Airport investment 'will create 10,000 jobs' (highly unlikely)

A £250m regeneration scheme centred on Coventry Airport to create 10,000 new jobs has been unveiled. Sir Peter Rigby, who bought Coventry Airport last April, says that the new employment will be generated as soon as 2015. The project would see two developments focussed on the airport itself and its infrastructure and a joint venture to build a business park nearby - with a technology office park and manufacturing and distribution opportunities. Improvements would also be made to passenger terminal and cargo facilities alongside a new, on-site hotel, restaurant, car parking, hangars and new access road. Sir Peter said the proposed development would also re-establish passenger flights which "would be a major boost to the local economy" Birmingham Airport, with aspirations to be a massive UK air transport hub, is around 12 miles away. . 21.4.2011 <http://bit.ly/lu6xmd>

Latest Carlisle Airport plans could end up at public inquiry

Stobart Air submitted a planning application in December 2010 to re-surface the runway and for



An artist's impression of how the redeveloped Carlisle Airport would look

"an airfreight distribution centre". This has been subsequently amended to "a freight storage and distribution centre (incorporating road haulage and air freight)" after discussions with the council to determine the exact nature of the proposed building. It is likely that what the Stobart Group plan to do with the site has little to do with aviation and that any talk of significant airport development is just PR. No date appears to have been set

yet for the committee to consider the matter as Carlisle City Council are still seeking information from both the applicant and various consultees. But the council is advertising Stobart's application as a 'departure' from the local plan, so they will need to be referred to the Government Office NW, which may call an inquiry - as happened in 2008. On the face of it there appears to be variance between what Stobart Group are saying to The City and what is in the actual application. Stobart is making all sorts of wild claims about the number of jobs to be created.

The airport itself was the focus of national attention last weekend when it hosted "Radio 1's big weekend" - a massive concert - and a fine time was had by all. The runways were used as car parks and the place gave the impression of being an old wartime airfield on its last knocking for public use. The site is six miles from Carlisle and sits in open countryside. Stobart Group plan to turn the place into a large industrial complex contrary to planning policy by relocating their existing businesses from Carlisle. In terms of material planning considerations their case appears to be weak, but the surrounding community waits to see what develops. <http://bit.ly/jBg2t3>

Socio-economic class of UK passengers has not changed over time

Work by Jeremy Birch, from the Stop Bristol Airport Expansion campaign, show clearly that the fraction of passengers in each socio-economic group has stayed almost constant since 1996, and there certainly has not been an increase in the fraction of poorer people flying. As the total number flying has increased, this means that the poorer people do fly more than before, but there is no progressive element here. Jeremy's study used CAA passenger data from 1996 onwards. Details are at http://www.aef.org.uk/downloads//socialclass_May2011.pdf

EC should make tax fairer by extending VAT to air travel

The Aviation Environment Federation and Transport & Environment have submitted comments on the EC consultation on changes to VAT. There is no VAT on airline tickets, or cruise or ferry tickets. Both AEF and T&E argue there is no reason why the aviation industry should remain exempt. A major strand running through the consultation is the desirability of charging VAT on the widest possible range of goods and services, in order that the rate can be kept low. The current system with no VAT on aviation distorts the economy and creates an artificial demand for air travel. There is no obvious social or economic justification for air travel's exemption, and indeed the absence of VAT on air travel is unfair and regressive. The great majority of air travel is for leisure and most is undertaken by well-off people. Absence of VAT on aviation means that higher taxes (VAT or other) have to be levied elsewhere, often on poorer people.

AEF and T&E recognise that there are significant issues to be resolved in applying VAT to air travel, but they are not considered to be insuperable. They do not accept that lobbying and special pleading coming from the aviation industry that it should not be required to pay taxes that most other businesses and most other sectors of economy have to pay. The EC VAT consultation closes on 31st May. EC VAT consultation is at <http://bit.ly/huf7kL>. The AEF response can be seen at <http://www.aef.org.uk/uploads/EuVatConsult.doc>

"There is no VAT on any aspect of air travel, not on airline tickets, nor on purchase of aircraft, nor on their servicing, nor on their fuel, nor on air traffic control, nor on baggage handling, nor on aircraft meals. Everything to do with air travel after passport control is zero rated."

Brendon Sewill, The Hidden Cost of Flying

Guernsey Airport runway rebuild compulsory purchase of land

The States of Guernsey has been asked to approve the compulsory purchase of two pieces of land to allow the airport runway redevelopment to go ahead. If approved the land would be used for approach lights. The Public Services Department said the purchase was urgent as without

permission of the landowner a planning application could not be made, and delays to the project could add significantly to the cost, already estimated to be £81m.

The runway work involves maintenance and improvements to taxiways, the apron, lighting, drainage, extension of the runway end safety areas and the move of the current runway by about 120m to the west. This move means the approach lights at both the eastern and western ends also need to be moved as the visual aids for pilots need to be positioned relative to the runway.

The two land areas, owned by different people, measure 2,000 sq m and 655 sq m. 15.5.2011
<http://bit.ly/m33ZJ6> The Guernsey Airport Campaign has a Facebook page at
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Guernsey-Airport-Campaign-GAC/132380340134748>

Amid greenwashing claims, US environmental groups tell their major airlines to drop opposition to EU ETS



Leaders of six major US green groups – the Environmental Defense Fund, Center for Biological Diversity, Earthjustice, Environment America, Natural Resources Defense Council and Sierra Club – have sharply criticised 3 leading US airlines over lobbying and legal efforts to prevent their inclusion in ETS from next year while simultaneously bragging about their environmental performance. They have written to the CEOs to denounce the airlines for bringing the suit at the European Court of Justice, and say new technological advance to cut CO2 is needed, not litigation. Adverts from the green groups, for the in flight magazines, have just been rejected. The letter notes that if the two airlines are committed to reducing their environmental impact and protecting the earth then “it makes no sense to spend [their] customers’ money on lawyers and lobbyists in an effort to thwart a crucial anti-pollution programme.” 16.5.2011 <http://bit.ly/keKF0x>

Reform of Air Passenger Duty - A Response from GACC

In March, the government launched their APD consultation - it closes on 17th June - and announced there would not be a per plane tax. The APD consultation deals with the level of APD, adding the tax to business flights, and changing the bands. The airline industry is divided between the short haul, budget airlines that want lower APD on short flights, and carriers like Virgin that want less tax on long flights. <http://bit.ly/inpyLf> One proposal in the APD consultation is to cut from the current 4 distance bands, to 2 or 3 - making the longest flights relatively cheaper.

The Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign (GACC) has produced a very useful, and easy to read, response to the consultation. The whole response is at <http://bit.ly/mKl0xT> and most of it is copied below:

Per-plane tax We were disappointed that the proposal for a per-plane tax has been dropped but welcome the statement that the Government ‘will continue working with our international partners to build understanding and support for this approach in the future.’ We hope that alternative methods of imposing tax on air freight, and on transfer passengers, can be explored.

APD should be increased The main thing wrong with APD is that it is too low. As is well known, air travel pays much less tax than car travel.

- Airlines pay no tax on aircraft fuel. Motorists pay 59 p a litre duty on petrol and diesel. The price including fuel duty is subject to VAT at 20%. Thus the tax on petrol is at a rate of approx 160%. Tax on aviation fuel is 0%.
- Airlines pay no VAT. There is no VAT on airline tickets. There is no VAT on the purchase of aircraft. Motorists pay VAT at 20% on the purchase of cars. There is no VAT on the servicing of aircraft. Motorists pay VAT at 20% on the servicing of their cars.

- The total revenue from air passenger duty in 2011-12 is forecast at £2.5 billion. The loss of revenue as a result of no fuel tax and no VAT on airlines is over £11 billion a year. To achieve fair tax with motorists, air passenger duty would need to be more than quadrupled !
- Compared to car travel, air travel benefits from an annual ‘tax subsidy’ of around £9 billion. The 50% of the population who don’t fly (mostly the poor) are paying a subsidy of around £600 per head to those who do fly (mostly the better off).

Adverse impact The low rate of tax on aviation distorts demand and thus diminishes public welfare. It leads to an artificial increase in air travel creating serious environmental damage – more noise, more pollution and making the Government’s climate change targets harder to achieve. Because demand is distorted, every other section of the economy has to pay for this tax subsidy with, probably, greater impact on employment.

Comparison with other countries In the past year, the aviation industry has been making much of the fact that air passenger duty in the UK is higher than similar taxes in other countries. The answer to this is not to reduce APD but to encourage other countries to impose, or raise, similar taxes.

A revenue tax We welcome the statement in the consultation document that: ‘In considering possible reform of aviation taxation, the Government is keen to stress its requirement for revenue, within a tax regime that is fair to everyone.’

When Chancellor Kenneth Clarke introduced APD in his 1993 Budget he stated that the purpose of APD was to raise revenue from an industry which benefited from paying no fuel tax and no VAT. In our view fiscal equity remains the primary purpose of APD.

The Emissions Cost Assessment published on the DfT website in July 2008 was fundamentally flawed in that it assumed that APD could all be allocated as covering the cost of aviation’s climate change damage, and by being based on an unrealistically low cost of carbon. Road users pay tax roughly equal to twelve times their climate change damage.

Fewer bands ? With bands of APD based on distance from the UK, wherever the bands are fixed there will be anomalies at the borderlines. The more bands there are, however, the smaller in scale will be the anomalies. The more bands there are, the closer the tax will be related to the environmental damage caused.

Since in general the further the distance flown, the higher the air fare, the more the number of bands the nearer the APD will approximate to the non-existent VAT.

The greater the distance, the higher the air fare, and the more likely it is that such flights will be purchased by the better-off. The more bands, therefore, the more progressive the tax.

Misleading statements The first 15 pages of the consultation document contain a number of tendentious or misleading statements, and read as if written by an aviation industry lobbyist. Examples include:

- ⊖ *In 2009 aviation contributed around £18 billion to UK output.* The size of an industry is irrelevant to its tax status – other than to imply that if VAT were to be imposed at 20% the extra revenue would be £3.6 billion.
- ⊖ *The sector employs over 250,000 workers directly and supports an estimated 200,000 additional jobs throughout the supply chain.* This is irrelevant and misleading. The more detailed figures in the consultation document reveal that air transport directly employs a mere 0.36% of the UK workforce. Every industry – not only aviation - supports a large number of workers through its supply chain.
- ⊖ *Around 1.5 million jobs in the UK (5 per cent of employment) are directly dependent on tourism.* This ignores the ‘tourist deficit’. Aviation permits and encourages far more Brits to fly abroad than foreigners to come here. For every job created in Britain, four are created abroad.
- ⊖ *Many developing countries have in turn built-up substantial local economies based on international tourism.* This ignores the fact that many of these countries are also those likely to be worst affected by climate change: indeed at Cancun it was the small developing nations that pressed for a tax on aviation.

- ⊖ *The Government recognises the importance of visits abroad to see friends or relatives; these journeys are often a necessity, not a holiday or a luxury. Visits by car to see friends and relative are also often a necessity but that is not held to justify a low rate of tax.*
- ⊖ *The jet aircraft of today are much more fuel efficient than those of forty years ago. Again irrelevant to the issue of the proper level of taxation.*

The APD consultation document is at: http://cdn.hm-treasury.gov.uk/2011budget_airpassenger.pdf

Olympic Torch will be flying to outlying parts of the UK - not by ferry?

The route of the 70 day Olympic torch around the UK has now been published, and it seems the torch will be going by plane between the mainland and islands. The route will include six island visits - to the Isle of Man, Guernsey, Jersey, Shetland, Orkney and the Isle of Lewis. You would have thought a ferry trip would be possible. <http://bbc.in/iuNcy5> It also flies from Greece to the UK. It appears that in 2009, the torch was flown from Athens to Vancouver, it was given six separate seats, to accommodate the flame in six miners' lanterns. Larger version of the photo at <http://bo.st/kzyvjs>



Global CO2 levels - over 389 ppm in 2010 (316 ppm in 1959)



Year	CO2 (ppm)	Notes (ppm is parts per million)
2010	389.78	
2009	387.35	Copenhagen Accord
2008	385.57	
2007	383.71	
2006	381.85	
1997	363.47	Kyoto Protocol
1992	356.27	Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro
1987	348.98	The last year that annual CO2 was below 350 ppm
1959	315.98	The first year with a full year of instrument data

<http://co2now.org/Current-CO2/CO2-Now/annual-co2.html>

Useful Info

- ❖ For up to date news see AirportWatch's news pages <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/news/index.php>
- ❖ News and analysis on the AEF website at <http://www.aef.org.uk>
- ❖ For websites of **airport-related groups** and other organisations <http://www.airportwatch.org.uk/links.php>
- ❖ For a daily update on aviation and transport news from national and local media, go to www.transportinfo.org.uk
- ❖ How to really offset the climate change impact of your flight: www.ThinkBeforeYouFly.com
- ❖ Weekly update by IATA on jet fuel price. <http://bit.ly/gCtAnD>
- ❖ "If God had really intended men to fly, he'd make it easier to get to the airport." George Winters

www.airportwatch.org.uk

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*Bulletin compiled by Sarah Clayton - with thanks to many people
for their help, guidance and contributions 23.5.2011*