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## **16 March 2006: Tranquillity of Oxfordshire countryside shattered by new flight path**

*Embargoed until 00.01 hours Wednesday 28 September*

The peace and quiet of 50 square miles of Oxfordshire is to be destroyed on 16 March 2006. If the Civil Aviation Authority gets its way, the tranquillity of Faringdon, Stanford in the Vale, Buscot and several villages will be shattered by a new flight path from London. [1] Up to 28 aircraft an hour will be allowed to fly over one of the quietest and most attractive areas of Oxfordshire.

Hubert Beaumont [2] of CPRE [3] criticises the plans: “The villages of the Vale of the White Horse provide a welcome respite from the busy heartland of Oxfordshire. Our villages are not just for those that live here. They are enjoyed by visitors from our nearby towns including Oxford. People come to walk, to see our ancient monuments and to enjoy our pubs and restaurants. It seems that the peace we share with so many people is to be destroyed as yet again commercial pressures are put before the environment and quality of life.” [4]

The CAA proposes a new air traffic corridor beginning between Grove and Stanford in the Vale—where it will be four miles wide—and stretching to Monmouth in the Welsh Borders—where it will be 12 miles wide (see maps). [5] In Oxfordshire, the flight path passes over some of our quietest countryside, most scenic villages and finest historic monuments at a height of only 10,500 feet. From 16 March 2006, the CAA predicts that there will 192 flights from London through the corridor every day; one every three minutes at peak times. In 2018, there will be up to 235 flights a day and one every two minutes at peak times. And the CAA admit that they may have underestimated the number of flights by 25%. [6]

In Oxfordshire, more than a dozen towns, villages and hamlets will be subject to unwanted aircraft noise under the new flight path, [7] while villages and towns from Henley to Grove will have many more aircraft overhead.

Andy Boddington [8] rejects the government’s approach. “This is another calamitous consequence of the government’s ‘predict and provide’ policy for air travel. The CAA have spotted that there is an area of the Southeast that is undisturbed by a flight path and wish to grab it. They seem determined to make our country so noisy that we will have to fly out of it to find peace and quiet. Their plans make no environmental sense. If air travel expands in the way the government wishes, the only way the government will meet its targets on climate change is for all householders, motorists and businesses cut their carbon dioxide emissions to zero.” [9]

The CAA is consulting on its proposals until 7 November 2005. [10] Objections should be sent to Mr JD Benoist, CAA House, Kingsway, London; 020 7453 6550; westend@dap.caa.co.uk. More information at cpreoxon.org.uk.

ENDS

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[1] Consultative Letter from John Arscott, Director of Airspace at the CAA:  
[www.caa.co.uk/docs/7/DAP\\_ERA\\_West\\_End\\_ACP.pdf](http://www.caa.co.uk/docs/7/DAP_ERA_West_End_ACP.pdf).  
[www.caa.co.uk/docs/7/DAP\\_ERA\\_WestEnd\\_Charts.pdf](http://www.caa.co.uk/docs/7/DAP_ERA_WestEnd_Charts.pdf).

[2] Hubert Beaumont is Chairman on the Vale of White Horse District of Oxfordshire CPRE and lives at Stanford in the Vale.

[3]. The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England Oxfordshire is a branch of the national CPRE charity. We have 1,300 members in Oxfordshire, where we have been campaigning to promote the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of Rural Oxfordshire for 75 years.

[4] Historic landscapes affected include Kelmscott Manor (home of William Morris; owned by the Society of Antiquaries, London); Buscot weir and village (National Trust); Buscot Park (Lord Faringdon); Badbury Hill (Iron Age Hill Fort; National Trust); Great Coxwell Tithe Barn (National Trust). Footpaths affected include the Thames Path and the Dalton d'Arcy Way. Towns and villages directly affected are: Kelmscott, Eaton Hastings, Buscot, Coleshill, Little & Great Coxwell, Faringdon, Littleworth, Shellingford, Hatford, Stanford in the Vale, Goosey, Charney Basset. The plans will also steer increased air traffic over the existing controlled air space above Grove, Didcot, Wallingford and Henley on Thames.

[5] The flights will be to Ireland and North America. The intention is to increase the westbound capacity from London by 42% by 2018.

[6] Note 6 of Consultative Letter, page E4 of 8. NOTA is new airspace northwest of Ireland.

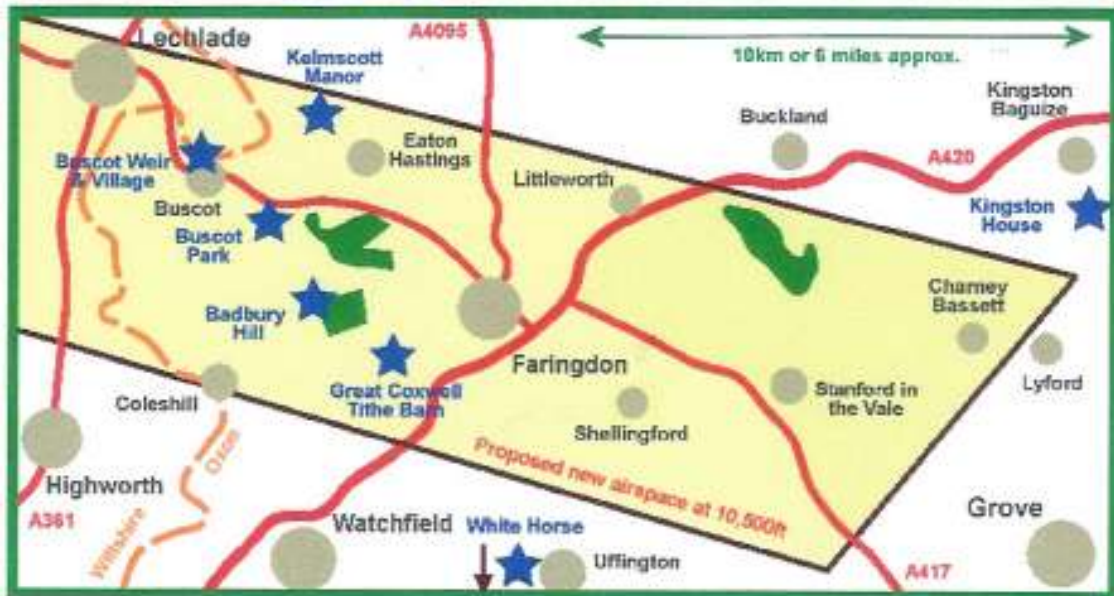
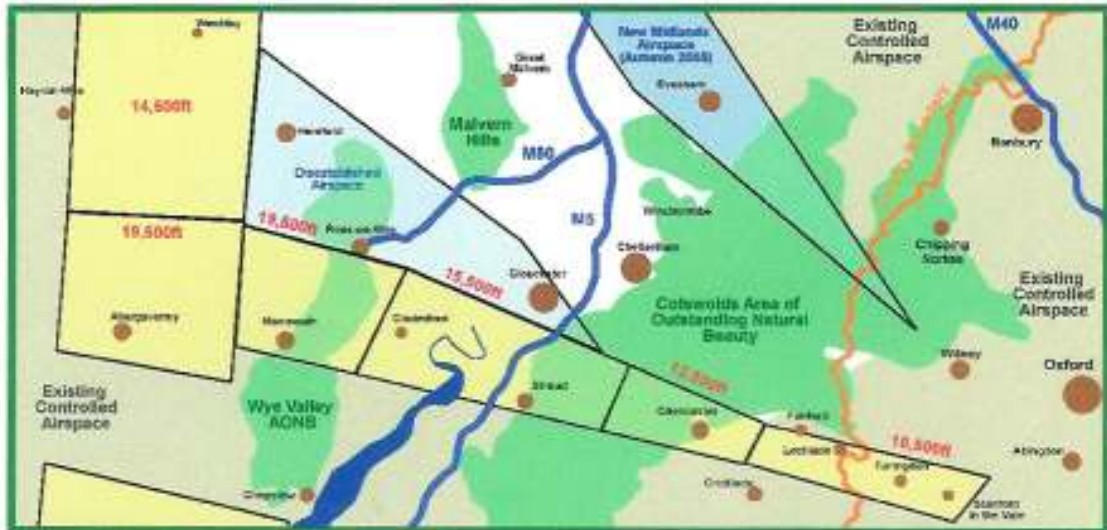
[7] The CAA admits it is uncertain about the sound levels these planes will generate (Annex D: paragraph 19, page D4 of 9). They estimate the level will vary between 25 decibels (the sound level of strong wind in trees) and 60 decibels (level of a loud conversation). The CAA is even less certain how much annoyance this noise will cause (paragraph 18). The government insists that aircraft noise below 57 decibels (the levels experienced in Putney, Fulham and Battersea) is not annoying to people on the ground but the impacts in quiet countryside will be immeasurably greater than in noisy cities. The World Health Organisation recommends a much lower "annoyance limit" of 50 decibels. [The decibel scale is logarithmic: 60 decibels is ten times louder than 50 decibels.]

[8] Andy Boddington is Campaign Manager for CPRE Oxfordshire.

[9] Research from the Tyndall Centre on Climate Change, 21 September 2005.  
[tyndall.e-collaboration.co.uk/media/news/latest\\_news.html](http://tyndall.e-collaboration.co.uk/media/news/latest_news.html).

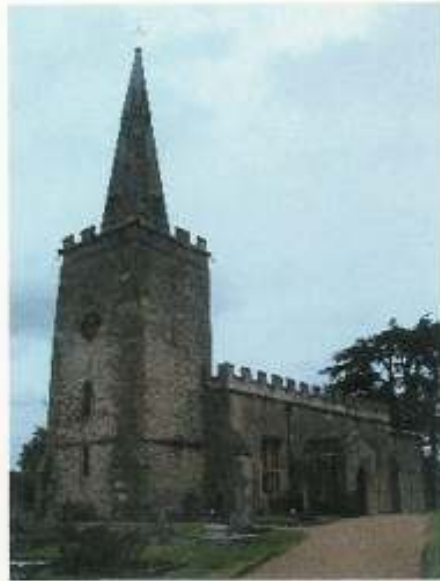
[10] The CAA has consulted numerous organisations (Annex G). Oxfordshire County Council and the Vale of the White Horse District Council are not listed.

For high quality images, go to [www.cpreoxon.org.uk/press](http://www.cpreoxon.org.uk/press).





Kelmscott



Shellingford



Charney Bassett



Buscot Weir



Faringdon Folly



Great Coxwell