

Dear Beaulieu Permit holder,

This is the first newsletter of 2016 which is being sent to current permit holders only. If you don't want to receive future newsletters please let us know.

The 2016 permit application process continues to work well, with most people renewing via the website, which has experienced very few problems. Thank you to all those who have used the website, and indeed well done to all who have renewed already this year.

Now the good news: You will be pleased to hear that the access road to the airfield was opened last week, on Thursday 28th January, as promised to us by the New Forest Civil Engineering department. It had been closed to all users, including dog-walkers, hikers, cyclists and the general public since before Christmas owing to the bad state of the track. This has been one of the longest closures in living memory and has been a considerable inconvenience to us. However, we have had active interaction and cooperation with the Forestry during this period and have succeeded in holding them to their promise to re-open the track as soon as possible.

There has been comment from some modellers to the effect that this is the "beginning of the end", "a slippery slope", whatever, to constrain or prevent us. I have to counter this view with the fact that in my interactions with the Forestry I have gained quite the opposite view: they want us to continue flying, and do approve of our activities. This has come from all departments, the permissions officer, the local ranger, the keeper, and the engineers. However, they made a judgement this year that the track was not in a good state, and the subsequent wettest winter on record, with the associated flooding, has confirmed that view. Now hundreds of tons of new material has been laid down and the access track is in a better state. We can help by driving slowly, although there is nothing we can do about the general public.

A new initiative that some of you have taken advantage is the news page on our the website at <http://beaulieumodel flying.org.uk/news.html> where we have been posting the latest information as far as we have it. This now reflects the current position and we will endeavour to update it with other news items as they occur. Can I suggest that you check there first if you have query.

Fortunately for us, or unfortunately if you look at it that way, the wet and windy weather has meant that we haven't been able to do much flying so far this year. It looks set to continue like this I'm afraid, and there is a longer term forecast of a cold snap later on. The heath is an inhospitable place at the best of times (that's why it's an airfield !), but hopefully the weather will improve. Keep a good lookout on your favourite weather website (there are some links on our website).

On the wildlife front, and I know some of you are interested, I can report that recently we have seen swans flying low over the airfield, along with the ever present Kestrels and Buzzards. There are also lots of small birds. Perhaps the exceptionally mild temperatures have helped them. So do keep a lookout for low flying birds - an interaction with a swan could be interesting !

Best wishes, Richard.

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