

THE BOTTOM RUNG

Noise: the challenges, trends, technologies, politics and opportunities

Looking forward; seeking solutions

Summer 2022

LISTEN TO LONDON: THE NOISIEST CITY IN EUROPE



A new interactive map allows you to listen to the traffic noise in London. A recent UN report - https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/38060/Frontiers_2022CH1.pdf - branded London the noisiest city in Europe. The UK Government estimates that the 'social cost' of the problem totals somewhere between £7 billion and £10 billion every year.

Residents can zoom in on their own street using The London Noisy City Map, created by the climate charity Possible and Jetpack AI, using Government data <https://interactive.wearepossible.org/noisycities/#/?city=london&language=en>

The EU argues that when noise averages out at over 55 decibels it can become harmful. And, remember, decibels are not a linear scale. Instead, we experience an increase of 10 decibels as a doubling of loudness. For example, 80 decibels is four times louder than 60 decibels.

This issue focuses on **traffic noise**, especially on the places where it is worst: main roads. It carries an **exclusive interview** with Peter Kelly, the man who came up with the idea to replace M8 through Glasgow. **But also includes:** sound cameras in Barcelona, plans to quieten London's eateries and a warning from the US about concentrated flight paths.

London's eateries the loudest in Europe and the second noisiest in the world

Cutlery clanging on plates, chairs scraping across a hardwood floor, the boisterous anecdote of a half-cut raconteur: when it comes to restaurants, one person's idea of a "good atmosphere" has another reaching for their earplugs. But for those who like their food served up along with the decibel levels of a motorbike or lawnmower, London is the place to be. Data released this week reveals that the capital's restaurants are the loudest in Europe, and second only to San Francisco worldwide. A random survey by SoundPrint a global app measuring noise levels, found 80% of 1,350 London restaurants were too loud for conversation.



Shack Fuyu in Soho identified as London's noisiest restaurant
Photo: Christian Sinibaldi, The Guardian

Half of those measured exceeded 80 decibels (dBA) during peak times, louder than a vacuum cleaner and past the threshold for potentially endangering hearing. The restaurant at the top of the table, according to the data provided by app users, was the Japanese restaurant Shack Fuyu in Soho, which registered 94 dBA, according to one reading submitted. According to the hearing loss charity RNID, volumes of more than 90 decibels are equivalent to sitting next to a motorbike or lawnmower, and continued exposure to noise at or above 80-85dBA can cause hearing loss. A recent RNID survey found four out of five respondents had had difficulty holding conversations in restaurants. It estimates one in five adults have hearing loss.

For those who would prefer a more serene dining experience, turning down the offerings of youthful vigour with a side order of tinnitus, SoundPrint has crowdsourced a database of quiet lists on its website. It was developed by Gregory Scott, a New Yorker who found it impossible to hear women he went on dates with due to his hearing loss. Carpets and curtains, which help dampen sound, are more likely to be found in more expensive places that cater to an older clientele, the food critic Jay Rayner said.



Mumbli
Certified for Sound
A great space to work meet date
mumbli.com

Mumbli <https://mumbli.com/> works with venues who want to reduce noise within them. With great success. The UK Noise Association will shortly be recording an exciting video webinar with Mumbli to show what success looks like.

Pipedown, the campaign for freedom from piped music, is urging restaurateurs and publicans to check their noise levels using the SoundPrint app amid the "growing trend of industrial-style decor". Its national secretary, Nigel Rodgers, said: "It amplifies all types of noise. Instead of absorbing it, it bounces back everything from loud voices to clanging plates and rattling cutlery to piped music."

This is an abridged version of an article by Caroline Davies and Harry Taylor which appeared in the Guardian (24/6.22).

BURIED BY NOISE

Bury, just outside Manchester, is consistently ranked as one of the worst in the UK for road and rail noise. We spent a weekend there to find out for ourselves.....



The M66 runs through the middle of the Dicky Bird estate in Bury (Image: Google)

On arrival, we made straight for the Dicky Bird Estate. It is in the top 1% of the most deprived areas in the UK. And a major motorway splits it in half. The noise barriers deaden the roar but the noise – and vibration – is constant for the residents. It averages out between 65 and 70 decibels, more than twice the safe level recommended by the World Health Organisation. Here's our recording of the traffic noise: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/V9v9503f6uo>



But these noise levels were *exceeded* on a lot of Bury's many other main roads. Bury is criss-crossed by heavily trafficked 'A' roads and ring roads. They are without barriers

and people live just beside them. Noise averaged out 10 decibels higher (that is, double the loudness) than for those people living beside the M66. Here's what they sound like:

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/vk2XcnV3lZU>

Of course there are side roads which are quiet but you are rarely far from a busy main road or junction.

Here's the noise of a typical junction within the town: https://www.youtube.com/shorts/dVN4_qHrjQc

What are reasons for all this traffic?

- Bury is on though routes between a number of key towns and cities in the region like Manchester, Bolton and Rochdale.
- There are car-based retail parks at many of the major junctions (see photo right).
- While the town is served by buses, the car is a lot easier for many of the journeys.

What can be done about the traffic?

Lower speeds, which the council has introduced on the side roads, would cut noise, as would the introduction of electric vehicles. But traffic volumes remain the big problem. This can only be dealt with by significant investment in regional public transport links, building on the Manchester tram link (which goes to Bury). For more local journeys, cheaper buses and improved conditions for cyclists would help. But there are no short-term solutions for the town buried by noise. And did we mention the freight line which runs through the heart of Bury?



MEANWHILE, PARIS TO CUT TRAFFIC ON ITS RING ROAD



The Mayor of Paris has announced ambitious plans to cut traffic on the city's ring road, 'le peripherique'. They include proposals for bus, carpool and taxi use in 2024. And by 2030 the plan is to eliminate a car lane in both directions. It is also proposed to plant 50,000 trees to cut air pollution impacts.

REPLACE THE M8

The idea seemed outrageous: to do away with a key traffic artery through the centre of Glasgow. But it has inspired campaigns to do just that. I was intrigued to meet Peter Kelly, the man who came up with the idea....

The M8 in Glasgow takes me back to my childhood. My mother had an old friend who lived in the east end of Glasgow. In the 1960s we visited her on a regular basis. It was around the time a motorway, the M8, was being built through the heart of the city. Many of the places we visited were demolished to make way for the motorway. People in other areas were left within constant earshot of the sound of motorway traffic: listen to it in Alexandra Park, as recorded recently by Patrick Jameson <https://youtube.com/shorts/PCOt1BZoCFk>



I was intrigued when, just over a year ago, I heard somebody had come up with the idea to 'Replace the M8'. It seemed outrageous: to do away with a key traffic artery through Scotland's largest city. But it also had a beautiful simplicity about it: to shut down the monster motorway that is the cause of so much noise, air pollution and emissions; to cut this thread of noise and pollution that winds its ugly way through a very fine city. (Listen to the noise and observe the community severance in this video recorded by Caroline Millar: https://youtu.be/TbYgKP2_ABg). I was therefore delighted when the man who dreamt up this simple, and seemingly outrageous, idea agreed to be interviewed. Peter Kelly is from the Isle of Wight but many years ago fell in love with Glasgow and moved up to live there. He's an urban designer who is 'in awe' of the city's dense international scale and the unique grid layout of its roads in its centre.

Peter told me that what excited him was 'a love of liveable' cities; not spoilt by cars, roads and tower blocks which smash up organic, people-friendly cities. It was during lockdown, when Peter was researching wider projects that it struck him that any modern, successful city would have a plan to deal with a motorway which cut through its heart. But there were no such plans in place for Glasgow. The M8, and way in which it had eradicated so much history, became an obsession for him.

It is worth saying that Peter Kelly does not come across as an obsessive. Nor as a driven campaigner. Far from it. He's a laid-back character whose simple desire is that his adopted city becomes a more liveable one. He also stressed that, while there weren't any plans to completely remove the motorway link in the public domain, Glaswegians have been critical of the road since its construction and that there are countless other people hard at work in the city trying to improve it as a place to live.

When he first put the idea out, it got surprisingly little push back. Rather, a diverse range of people were excited by it and encouraged him to take it further.

What the M8 could become →

It could be Peter's idea taps into where Glasgow is at right now. He told me Glasgow is a proud city that has been through hard times but which has not lost the 'gallus' that once made it one of the world's most important cities. It is now ready to restore that leadership role. It was proud to host COP 26, the recent climate conference. It is Scotland's only metropolis. The country, whose economy for so long had a dependence on North Sea oil, is moving into a post-oil phase. Scotland and Glasgow are open to new ideas for the future of its economy, maybe even as an independent country. Replacing the M8 with something better could be a shot in the arm for the metropolitan engine of



Scotland's economy. He believes it also taps into the emerging mood of the current age: the desire to reduce negative impacts on the climate; to tackle noise and air pollution; to create attractive cities based around public transport rather than the car.

Peter acknowledges that the M8, as with all Glasgow's motorways, was built with a view to moving goods and people to and through the city in order to benefit the economy. That is still the official position of the Scottish Government. He argues, though, that was the era of heavy industry (which was the motor of Glasgow's economy) but with much of the shipbuilding and steel works gone, and with a recently completed alternative motorway to the south of the city, the need for the central M8 needs to be re-evaluated.

I put it to him that closing down the M8 would risk transferring car and lorry traffic on to other roads, particularly the M74 (which cuts through parts of outer Glasgow). He says it is likely that the M8 would be replaced by a 21st century, multi-modal urban street, still taking some local traffic, but which you would also be happy to walk or cycle along. It would take up far less space and allow for the restoration of lost urban blocks, parks as well as restored connections to and from the city centre. He also pointed to evidence from cities which have removed their own central motorways which showed the phenomena of 'induced demand' is reversed. Traffic seems to naturally reduce to fit the changed capacity of the road network; anticipated gridlock just doesn't materialise.

I suggested that replacing the M8 through Glasgow would be such a momentous step that it would be the catalyst for considerable changes in, and improvements to, the wider transport network. Peter agreed. He said he envisaged replacing it as 'a piece of the puzzle' which would include better public transport. He saw it forming part of an integrated transport system for the wider Glasgow metropolis. It is this that has the potential to reduce the overall number of car movements, which is a goal of Scotland and Glasgow's main political parties

A number of people and organisations have rallied to the call to Replace the M8 – the Greens (who share power with the Scottish National Party in the Scottish Parliament) back the @ReplacetheM8 campaign’s suggestion of a study to look at the potential of replacing the motorway. There has been a Petition in the Scottish Parliament which is still open and gathering responses. Individual Members of the Scottish Parliament such as Labour’s Paul Sweeney back the idea of big changes to the motorway, along with many city’s councillors and walking, cycling,



Peter Kelly addressing a recent conference

climate and other environmental groups. They are forming networks. Peter is relaxed the future campaigning on the issue is being taken out of his hands as the idea gains momentum.

He returns to the theme that it is an idea whose time has come. Cities across the world from Portland to Utrecht and Seoul are getting rid of their urban motorways in order to heal the social and physical damage they created. Many of the entrepreneurs in the new hi-tech industries choose to locate to liveable cities; they like to live close to a vibrant and healthy city centre. It is the most livable cities which are benefitting most from these 21st century industries. Sweeping away the M8 would add much valuable development land to Glasgow. It would also become the first UK city to close down a motorway of this size. Now that would be something which would put Glasgow back on the international map.

If it does happen, countless Glaswegians may come to thank this passionate campaign, as well as the growing number of people across Glasgow campaigning to repair the planning mistakes of the 20th century, for improving the quality of the city they call their ‘dear green place’.

Interview by John Stewart

And here is why cutting traffic noise is so important.....

Prolonged exposure to noise is deeply harmful to human health. A study of London residents found that those subjected to sustained, high levels of traffic noise were more likely to die, especially from strokes, and another from Sweden found increased risk of heart attacks. According to the World Health Organization, excessive noise can “cause cardiovascular and psychophysiological effects, reduce performance and provoke annoyance responses and changes in social behavior.”

Traffic noise can be damaging even if it goes unnoticed. Loud nocturnal sounds interrupt sleep, disrupting circadian rhythms and leading to hypertension. “Noise leads people to toss and turn more,” says Tara McAlexander, a professor of epidemiology and statistics at Drexel University. “So even when people say they’re not bothered, there is something still happening below the surface.”

Although people may not fully appreciate the health risks, most still try to avoid living near busy roads. “Noise is a part of the lack of quality of life in these environments, though the health impact is not directly tangible” says Anne Moudon, a professor emerita at the University of Washington’s department of urban design and planning.

Low-income, minority communities have a disproportionate share of major thoroughfares, making the decisions to route so many urban interstates through them during the 1950s and 1960s seem even more inequitable.

This is part of a longer article written by David Zipper for Slate (22/421)

<https://slate.com/technology/2021/04/commutes-noise-pollution-cars-cities.html>

NOISE IN HOSPITALS

By David Oliver, Consultant, geriatrics and general internal medicine



Hospital wards are meant to be therapeutic and healing environments, so we need more concerted action to tackle noise pollution in wards. Being surrounded by a cacophony of noise doesn't help patients get better, and it's not a nice environment for staff to work in. On a recent ward round, in one five bedded bay I found myself turning off radios next to three of the patients so that I could chat to them. They told me that they weren't listening to the music anyway: "Leave it off!" they said, when I offered to switch it back on.

And it's not just music from the radio—there are multiple sources of noise: beeping devices with alarms that are often ignored (though they're nominally there to prompt action); noisy patient call buttons and ward entry intercom bells; ward phones, often ringing unanswered; loud lids on metal waste bins; rattling cage trolleys full of ward supplies; dispensers for hand towels or aprons; staff pagers and phones; sometimes overloud conversations from staff in the course of their job or from visitors at bedsides; teams responding to emergencies; and—though they should never be blamed—other patients in distress or calling for help.

Of course, noise annoys, but it's more than an irritant. Sleep is crucial to recovery, yet so many of our patients complain of sleep disturbance in hospital. Numerous people have told me that noise was what they dreaded most about hospital admission or the reason they self-discharged. On any ward round some patients complain to me about it. A high proportion of inpatients have hearing loss or cognitive impairment. Background noise impairs communication and can be especially bad for patients with hearing aids or presbycusis. Whether in intensive care or more general ward areas, delirium is prevalent in hospital—and multiple, alien, noises and voices can compound it.

Patients prone to sensory overload, for instance, and some with autistic spectrum disorder or a learning disability, can be especially upset by noise. Those with dysphonia, dysarthria, or dysphasia or for whom English isn't their native language, or those who are sick or dying, can struggle to communicate with staff or visiting families above the noise. And, let's face it, noise levels are also an irritant to many patients who don't have those problems and to staff working there every day who can't always hear themselves speak or think, let alone hear colleagues properly. Studies on intensive care wards have even found that decibel meters showed higher noise levels on wards than on busy main roads.

What we lack is a concerted effort to move from awareness of the problem to implementing serious, sustained solutions. We've ignored the noise pollution problem for too long and grown too comfortable with accepting it. It's time to do something about it.

- This has been reprinted from the *BMJ* (27/4 22) Citation: *BMJ* 2022;377:o1027

Pipedown campaigns on noise in hospitals: <https://pipedown.org.uk/>

Barcelona to install sound level monitors to beat noise pollution

In our winter issue we carried an article about the problems for residents of the 'al fresco' dining which took place in Soho last year. Thankfully, it has not been allowed this summer.

Now comes the news Barcelona is to install noise meters in many of its streets and plazas.

Barcelona's streets and plazas have long been home to a raucous cacophony of restaurant patios, buskers and throngs of residents and tourists. Now the city is on a mission to find out just how noisy these spaces can get, with the installation of sound level monitors in 11 areas.

"It's an absolute priority," said Eloi Badia, the Barcelona city councillor for climate emergency and ecological transition. "Noise pollution – with all of its sleep disorders, pathologies and stress – is one of the most important public health issues we have in the city, second only to air pollution."

A recent study by Barcelona's public health agency found that about 57% of people in the city are regularly exposed to noise levels that exceed those recommended by the World Health Organization. The figure dwarfs the estimates across Europe, where one in five are exposed to harmful levels of noise pollution.

In the coming days, sound meters are expected to be installed in all the areas where residents regularly complain of noise. From there officials will start listening. Acceptable decibel limits vary from area to area, based on factors such as the width of the street or the distribution of buildings.

"If the limits are exceeded during two consecutive weekends, the area will be confirmed as acoustically stressed," Badia said. ***"In that case the district will have to present an action plan that can be worked on with neighbours, restaurants and others to try to mitigate the damage that is being done."***



"Al Fresco" dining in Soho

By Tim Lord, Chair of the Soho Society

In London's Soho the schemes for outside drinking and dining have proved controversial with many residents and other businesses objecting to the noise, waste and access restrictions caused by the schemes. Indeed, in November 2021 over 90% of residents that responded to a survey run by the Soho Society said any proposal to make the schemes permanent should be abandoned before any further damage is done to the credibility of the council.

It was incredibly noisy. In 2021 a number of long term residents were driven out of their homes by the noise in the street 7 days a week that often ran well past midnight. Desperate residents asked the council to at least measure the noise levels at night but it refused to do so. The Soho Society did its own survey in May 2021 which found maximum noise levels of 81-93dB in some streets. If that was in a factory you would be required to wear hearing protection.

Barcelona residents have waited many years for effective action



On 16th June over 30 associations took to the streets under the banner of “Silence.....Noise Kills”

One resident tweeted:

“There are areas in Barcelona such as Gracia that have had sound level monitors for years. Specially during night the noise level have been above the local legislation an WHO recommendations for years but unfortunately so far no real actions to solve it have been put in place.”

Potential actions could include limiting outdoor dining hours or curbing the hours that local stores sell alcohol. Residents whose areas are deemed “acoustically stressed” will also be able to access grants to help them insulate windows and soundproof their homes.

The initiative builds on a network of sound level meters already set up in the city, which had allowed officials to take sporadic action to address soaring noise levels, such as clearing out a plaza. With the recognition of specific acoustically stressed areas, officials hope to pave the way for lasting solutions.

“Our goal is to have a much quieter, more peaceful and friendly city,” Badia said. The initiative is part of a broader set of measures – from traffic calming to the reduction of noise at work sites – to be rolled out in Barcelona in the coming years. Many are aimed at quelling traffic noise, which ranks as the city’s primary source of noise pollution.



Evening entertainment and socialising on the Plaza Real, Barcelona. Photograph: Reed Kaestner/Getty Images

Issues have also long flared up around the city’s nightlife.

On Thursday more than 30 associations will take to the streets to protest under the banner of “Silence ... Noise kills!” Among those planning to attend is Jordi Badia, whose street is home to one of Barcelona’s highest concentrations of restaurant terraces. “We have 114 residential buildings and 116 licensed terraces,” he told El Periodico.

Noise levels have rocketed in recent months, fuelled by the proliferation of outdoor seating during the pandemic, Badia said. “There are stretches where it is brutal. It’s not just the terraces and the people, we have bars that close at three in the morning. When people leave at three in the morning, you can just imagine how it is.”

This article by Asifa Kassam first appeared in the Guardian (14/6/22)

THE CREEP OF NANNYING ANNOUNCEMENTS

By Laurie Graham



Waiting at a coach station recently, in the space of seven minutes I was cautioned three times by the disembodied voice of Big Nanny. No smoking or vaping was allowed. Cycling was prohibited. Pedestrians were directed to use only the designated crossings. I almost wished I'd opted to travel by rail, but then I remembered that Big Nanny rides on trains too.

In a quieter era of rail travel the only announcements, apart from service cancellations, used to be the one about refraining from urination when the train was in the station, and advice not to poke your head out of the window of a moving carriage. Which some dimwits nevertheless did with tragic consequences and so removed themselves from the gene pool.

Now, though, Train Nanny never shuts up. She reminds us to keep our belongings with us at all times and to take them with us when we reach our destination. To carry a bottle of water in hot weather. And most gratuitously of all, to take care when alighting. To what extent this last is just a bit of legal ass-covering, I'm not sure. If I choose to ignore the advice and do a reverse pike somersault on to the platform, will it be entirely my own foolish business? I hope so.

Nanny's script suggests we are infantile. She reminds us to keep our belongings with us at all times and to take them with us when we reach our destination. To carry a bottle of water in hot weather.....

Nanny's script suggests we are infantile, that as soon as we leave home we become clueless waifs, but the spectrum of human fallibility is broader than that. Some of us are deaf to everything save our own thoughts; some are reckless, or plain anti-social. After hearing those announcements do people still leave behind their umbrellas or briefcases containing sensitive government documents? Do passengers still faint from dehydration on hot, crowded trains? You bet.

The Secretary of State for Transport has promised us less of 'See it, say it', but it hasn't gone away. I heard it on a train this week and as ever it provoked in me an almost unbearable itch to report something that 'doesn't look right'. That grown man wearing his baseball cap sideways, for instance? Sorted. I joke, but through gritted teeth. Most of these announcements are redundant. They are, at best, a brain-numbing irritant. I suspect they reduce the attention we pay to truly important announcements like 'Leave the station by the nearest exit immediately'.

Nanny follows me everywhere. Hold the escalator handrail. Hold tight when the bus is moving. Be careful. Don't run with scissors. All rather obvious advice that I first heard 70 years ago. I began to wonder if I was being oversensitive – was this just a case of elder-tetchiness? We're all being subjected to Caution Creep, after all. Some embrace it, most ignore it. To me, 'staying safe' has become a suffocating concept.

In 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue. I doubt he'd have the gumption to do it nowadays. There'd be a wet surface hazard warning on the gangplank and that'd be that.

As a person of a certain age, I am wearied by these meaningless assurances and prompts. They tempt me to live whatever years I have left on the platform edge of life. Let's all stay safe? Let's not, but say we did. In fourteen hundred and ninety-two Columbus sailed the ocean blue. I doubt he'd have the gumption to do it nowadays. There'd be a wet surface hazard warning on the gangplank and that'd be that. He'd go home to his mum, who would no doubt be relieved because you can't be too careful. Except that I very much fear you can.

Laurie Graham is a novelist and scriptwriter. Her latest book is *Anyone For Seconds?* This is an abridged version of an article which first appeared in *The Spectator* 21/5/22

LOUDER THAN A PLANE LANDING AT HEATHROW

Our study, first published last year, has revealed that platform announcements on London Underground can reach 98 decibels, louder than a plane landing at Heathrow. The study looked at the relevance, volume and frequency of the announcements made on the London Underground network.



The study found:

- On average there is an announcement on London Underground trains every 42 seconds
- On an 18 minute journey on the Victoria Line there was a total of 22 announcements

Key recommendations:

- 1. The frequency of announcements is reduced.** This is very feasible as many of them are repeated far too frequently – sometimes the same announcement is repeated within a minute. It is also hard to argue that all the announcements are essential.
- 2. Move away from information overload.** Many passengers just switch off. Concentrate on proving clear basic information; and sound advice when there is a problem.
- 3. The loudness of the typical announcement is cut.** Platform announcements of 90 decibels and more serve no purpose other than to startle, annoy and, over time, damage hearing.
- 4. The announcements become much more concise.** Single words often hit home better than fully-fledged sentences.

The full study: http://www.ukna.org.uk/uploads/4/1/4/5/41458009/underground_announcements.pdf

CHANGING FLIGHT PATHS

Over the next few years flight paths will be changing at airports as satellite-based systems are introduced. They will mean narrower, concentrated flight paths. This will create noise ghettos unless the flight paths are alternated to provide respite. UK airports are expected to consult on new flight paths over the next two years. **Here is a cautionary tale from America....**

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

The first *ROAR* of a jet plane over my home occurred in October of 2011. At first, I did not think much of it but I did think to myself that these planes were awfully low. We had never experienced anything quite like this. The planes continued to come hour after hour, 2-3 minutes apart. The noise was incessant. I thought that it was just an anomaly, but the next day it happened again. Day after day the planes kept coming. I had to find out what was taking place. Through my research, I found that the FAA decided to make flight path changes called the Airspace Redesign System and to use a new technology called NextGen.

I started to attend meetings with the FAA and the Port Authority of NY/NJ. We were told at the meetings that the changes were for safety reasons and that planes are flown based on the weather conditions and prevailing winds. As far as our complaints, they were dutifully dismissed. Why not? The FAA looks upon us as a body of citizens who hold no power. It was apparent that we are viewed as group of rag tail citizens who have no chance in changing the decisions of the powerful FAA. The lies continued and the arrogance of the FAA only increased.

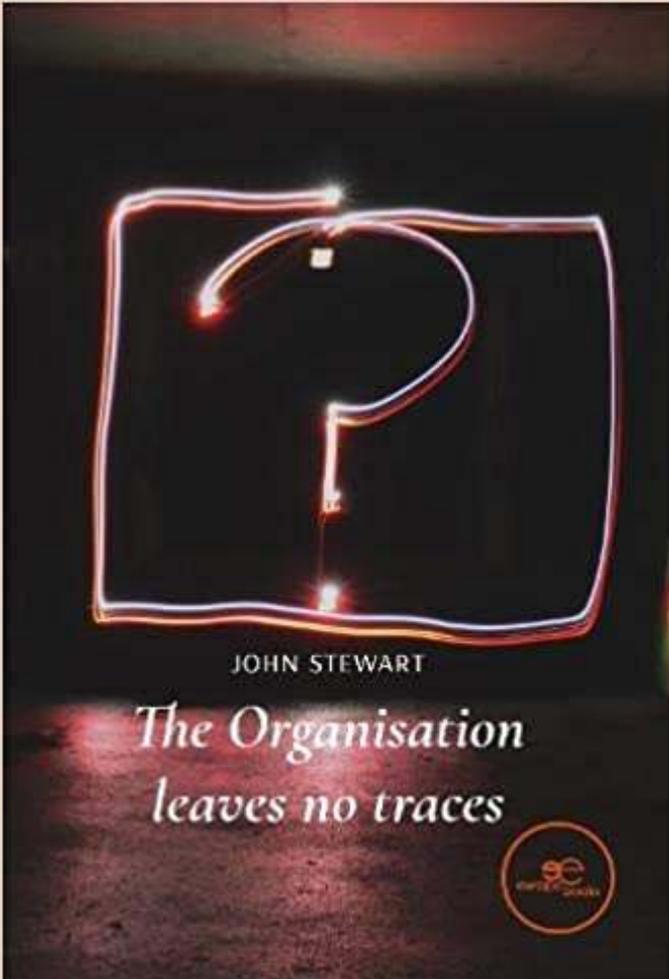
I logged every plane that flew over my home for a one year period. What I found was astonishing. It did not matter whether it was winter, spring, summer or fall; which way the winds were blowing or the weather conditions, it was all the same. Hundreds of flights were directed above my house at very low altitudes approximately 1500-2000 feet.

I was determined to find the truth, so I started to collect data that would support our accusations. I logged every plane that flew over my home for a one year period. What I found was astonishing. It did not matter whether it was winter, spring, summer or fall; which way the winds were blowing or the weather conditions, it was all the same. Hundreds of flights were directed above my house at very low altitudes approximately 1500-2000 feet.

I could not understand this since my community is approximately six miles from the airport. The planes, departures from JFK, fly from the early morning hours into the late hours of the evening. On many occasions, the flights would begin on the a.m. of one day and continue into the a.m. of the next day. Our community could receive flights anywhere from 100-300 planes a day. On September 16, 2014, on clear and sunny day, 236 planes flew over our homes. The period of April 5-April 10, 2015, we were subjected to 1029 flights; all low and oppressively *LOUD*.

My life was stolen from me on a beautiful October day. I am no longer happy living in my home because it has become a nightmare. The FAA stripped us of our basic rights and they feel confident that they will win this war since they are a bureaucratic agency that is completely autonomous; an agency that holds us in contempt. We must rise up to fight a courageous battle for all of the human rights that belong to us. Yes, there will be a number of people who will remain indifferent; however, there will be a group who will be inspired to fight a great power. After all, aren't we entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness? If your answer is yes, then join the fight!

Elaine Miller is a resident of Malverne, New York, and runs the Plane Sense 4 Long Island Website



Our editor has written a book of fictional short crime stories, based around the theme of noise.

“Joe was a normal guy with a normal life, dedicated to helping his mother in the family café. But events took an unexpected turn. They lead him into the criminal world. But how far was the lad from South Wales prepared to go? How many lives was he willing to put at risk? How ruthless would he become? The only certainty was that The Organisation Leaves No Traces.

In this short video he talks about the book:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5XwIXOpKA>

**You can purchase the book from the publisher,
Europe books**

<https://www.europebookstore.com/products/the-organisation-leaves-no-traces-john-stewart/>

Also available from Amazon and Waterstones

New Website Address

We have got a new website address:
<http://www.uknoiseassociation.com/>

With new features

Check it out!

Help! I've got a noise problem!

You can contact:

The Noise Abatement Society
<https://noiseabatementociety.org/>

Helpline on 01273 823 850;
email info@noise-abatement.org

The Noise Abatement Society also carries out a range of activities including research and lobbying

Or contact **ASB Help**, a charity which aims to provide information and advice to victims of anti-social behaviour

<https://asbhelp.co.uk/noisy-neighbours-noise/>

Noisedirect
08453 31 32 30

Independent, impartial advice line from noise professionals

The Bottom Rung is a quarterly journal published online by Cut Noise:
<http://www.uknoiseassociation.com/>

We are always looking for contributions, be it articles or opinion pieces.

Email johnstewart2@btconnect.com

Our blog site is at:
<https://www.cutnoise2day.co.uk/>

Twitter: @cutnoise