

AVIATION EYE

Another successful conference for ATCO members



IN LINE with tradition, more than 90 delegates and guests gathered at Bredbury Hall in Stockport on a wet weekend in November to hear panel discussions on the maturing market in airport operations and remote tower technology; a presentation on trends in civil aviation; and to consider a wide range of policy motions.

Perhaps anticipating the Chancellor's announcement that the government is considering selling its 49% shareholding in NATS, delegates decided to review the performance of the public-private partnership with a view to renewing the campaign to convert the company to a not-for-profit or publicly owned business.

This position seeks to build on Prospect's recent Sustainable Aviation policy, which questions the

risks posed by the commercialisation of the industry. Instead, Air Traffic Management is seen as key national infrastructure which should not be diverted by the profit motive.

Delegates had earlier been informed and entertained by transport specialist Professor Peter Turnbull of Bristol University. He described how the economic landscape of civil aviation has been transformed by the development of low cost airlines.

Pete warned that the regulatory framework was generating a "race to the bottom" in employment standards and, potentially, safety.

This set up a lively panel debate on contestability in the market for airport towers. The panelists – David Winstanley (Birmingham), Catherine Mason (NATS), Werner Spier (ANS,

Gatwick), Alfonso Guerrero (Spanish union USCA) and Stu Osman (ATCOs' branch, Gatwick) – described very different perspectives on the competitive pressures in airports and their priorities when deciding whether to put their towers out to tender and what to look for in bids.

Most delegates would have concluded that without qualified, committed and motivated staff there can be no service and that the air navigation service providers who recognise this will be the ones which attract those staff and thus survive and prosper.

But what about airport towers with no staff? The first remote tower in the UK is maybe only a year or two away and the technology, its application and its implications were the subject of the second discussion. An international union panel introduced a successful motion setting out Prospect's conditions for implementing this technology in the UK.

The downside of automation was also raised by delegates with experience of the introduction of AutoMet. There was growing anecdotal evidence that the equipment is not fit for purpose.

Further testing is required before NATS starts to plan staff numbers predicated on the removal of support.

Members were encouraged to register their concerns on the accuracy and reliability of the system via the appropriate channels.



Careers in Aerospace Live 2015

Some 800 visitors met more than 30 aerospace and aviation industry exhibitors at a Royal Aeronautical Society recruitment fair in London in November.

SESSIONS WITH representatives from employers and education institutes answered visitors' questions and provided expert advice on recruitment and professional development.

Exhibitors included QinetiQ; Talent Retention Solution; CTC Aviation; Airbus; Rolls Royce; the Royal Air Force; and Aviation Skills Partnership.

There were also seminars from Martin-Baker, the UK Space Agency and Middle Eastern Airways, as well as workshops on CV writing and opportunities for one-to-one sessions with employers.

Ray Elgy of Aviation Skills Partnership spoke of its work delivering information programmes to schools and colleges on training and employment in all main sectors of aviation.

Martin-Baker, a manufacturer of ejection seats and related safety equipment, attracted visitors to its stand with an ejection seat prototype which would be used in many of the military aircraft the company services.

Talent Retention Solution provides experienced professionals with direct access to job opportunities and employers of all sizes in the advanced manufacturing and engineering sector across the UK. Prospect works in partnership with TRS to provide this as a service to members. Richard Smith, an engagement director for TRS, said: "It's a great event, well organised and well attended. It's a pleasure to be here on the day to meet so many young people looking at careers in the sector, including those still at school seeking advice and guidance on next steps. This is the third November event I have attended and they just seem to get better."

The Royal Aeronautical Society has more than 19,500 members in over 100 countries, and will celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2016.

● For further details of RAeS events, including Aerospace Careers Live, contact Stephanie Bridgman on 01932 577055 or stephanie.bridgman@prospect.org.uk



Above: Richard Smith, TRS



New degree-level but practical and hands-on training courses for aircraft maintenance engineers are being developed by an independent organisation, the Aviation Skills Partnership.

THE PARTNERSHIP is a team of educational and industry specialists set up by consultant Simon Witts in 2013 to develop the "skills solutions" needed by the aviation industry. It works with training organisations, employers and the education sector.

It has developed a Higher Apprenticeship, BSc (Hons) degree programme for maintenance engineers that has been taken up by the universities of East Anglia and South Wales. The first course starts in September 2016.

The degree is wholly work-based and attendance at the awarding university is not required. Trainee engineers will complete all of their studies and practical work at an approved training organisation.

The University of East Anglia degree will be delivered in collaboration with KLM-UK Engineering and City College Norwich at a purpose-built international aviation academy at Norwich Airport.

The academy will contain a commercial airliner, provided by KLM-UK, and a commercial helicopter, both maintained in operational condition in an "Aviation Emulation Zone".



CAREER IN AVIATION



Trainee engineers will gain practical experience counting towards the experience required for a licence. The zone can also be used for courses provided by City College Norwich which may lead on to the degree, and will deliver qualifications in their own right, leading to jobs or apprenticeships.

The academy also contains workshops, a business café and seminar rooms and is due to open in late 2016.

Further academy "hubs" are due to be introduced by ASP and its partners across the UK.

ASP says the key to its success is insistence that its programmes comply fully with the requirements of industry, educational awarding bodies and regulators.

Each ASP partner is involved in development of the programmes throughout to ensure that they remain relevant and give value to employers.

ASP has similar programmes for pilots and other aviation employees.

For more information contact enquiries@aviationskillspartnership.com

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Pension reform at former BAA airports continues; will Gatwick be next?

Ben Middleton reports



ABERDEEN, GLASGOW and Southampton airport staff are the latest to see the start of negotiations on reform of their final salary pension schemes.

The three sites were acquired by AGS Airports Limited in December 2014 when they were sold off by Heathrow Airport Holdings (formerly BAA).

Spanish infrastructure and transport firm Ferrovial and the Australian Macquarie Group each own a 50% stake in the company, which was formed in September 2014 specifically to buy the three airports.

Pensions are not automatically covered under TUPE provisions, but agreements were made with Prospect and Unite that "mirror-image" defined benefit pension arrangements would be created and maintained until 31 January 2016.

Formal consultation began in September 2015 when union reps and officials and elected senior management staff representatives from all three airports met the company and actuarial advisors to run through the background figures, the case for change and to explore proposals with a view to establishing the "best deal achievable by negotiation".

More than half of the AGS staff are scheme members and, although the scheme was closed to new entrants in 2008, the current employer cost of this pension provision is around 36% of shift-inclusive salaries.

This figure is set to rise to over 40% as a consequence of reform of the state pension and the ending of contracting-out status. AGS argues that this is both unaffordable and unsustainable.

It has committed to wanting to retain a high quality, defined benefit pension arrangement for staff rather than looking instead at closing the scheme in favour of a less risky, less expensive, defined contribution scheme such as applies for all staff who joined after 2008.

The initial consultation phase is expected to run until at least the end of 2015 and will be followed by a statutory 60-day consultation period during which union members will be balloted on proposed changes.

With Stansted and Heathrow having already reformed their BAA pension arrangements, only Gatwick and Edinburgh of the original seven BAA airports have yet to tackle this contentious issue. The expectation is that Gatwick will be the next to follow suit.

AVIATION & SECURITY



In the wake of the bombing of the Russian Airbus A-321 leaving Sharm el-Sheikh and the atrocities in Paris, it is inevitable that there will be a renewed focus on airport security

RECENT TERRORIST attacks will make the passenger experience even worse and will undoubtedly impact on

Prospect members, especially those who work "airside" at a UK airport, including air traffic controllers and aircraft maintenance engineers.

Members will not complain about the level of security at airports. After all, it is there to protect them as much as fare-paying passengers. But it does need to be proportionate to the situation and properly vetted employees should be placed in a different category to passengers.

Engineers face a daily routine of being prevented from taking everyday items through security, which can raise stress and anxiety levels. One engineer had a half-drunk bottle of water in his possession but security staff prevented him from taking it airside even though he had a liquid pass.

He explained that if the liquid was used for cleaning aircraft, he would be permitted to take it through. He questioned how cleaning the aircraft was OK, but not drinking the water.

In a similar vein, cabin crew regularly experience a "Russian roulette" process to establish whether yoghurt is classed as a solid or liquid and the ridiculous process of ascertaining whether soup contains more solid "bits" than liquid.

Even spare parts for the aircraft

*By John Stevenson,
Prospect
negotiator*



are subject to security checks and engineers working at different airports are subject to different checks, often having to wait hours before being allowed to repair a grounded aircraft.

There are stories of pilots having nail files removed from overnight bags because they could be used as weapons. The fact that pilots were actually flying the plane did not seem to make a difference.

Issues arise with the length of time it takes to get through security. The morning rush creates massive queues, which have to be negotiated before air crew can "clock on". If they are late they are faced with attendance and time-keeping issues and the extra hours spent queuing go unpaid.

There is also the added inconvenience of being away from home for extended periods and being restricted to 100ml of liquid, which means that toiletries have to be used sparingly.

As one cabin crew member explained: "There is the sheer inconvenience of getting through security, emptying your bags and



separating liquids into clear plastic bags, getting undressed and being manhandled in front of your colleagues.

“Some days you feel harassed and exhausted before you have even checked in. I don’t know what the answer is, but I think for people who carry an airside pass then at least the rules on 100ml liquid allowance should be removed. We all want to be safe, but I fail to see how the requirement to present your liquids in a small plastic bag will make the world a safer place.”

The CAA provides advice and guidance for airports on the definition of a liquid. The main regulation covering liquids, aerosols and gels, EU Regulation 185/2010, also sets out the rules and requirements. Responsibility for enforcement, however, is with the airport itself, so rules are applied inconsistently.

The CAA provides presentations on aviation security as part of training courses and is responsible for developing new or revised syllabuses for aviation security training, which are then submitted to the Department

for Transport for approval. These cover subjects ranging from baggage handling to X-ray competency and air/ground crew training.

It is the DFT’s responsibility, as part of the wider government counter-terrorism strategy, to manage the risk to transport networks, while allowing transport systems to operate efficiently and effectively.

It would therefore appear that the inconsistencies at airports have arisen because the DFT provides guidance on security but the airports themselves interpret the guidance differently.

The government has announced that the funds for aviation security will be doubled, but much of this money will be spent overseas and not in British airports.

The funding, formally announced in the five-year defence and security review, will be used to hire additional aviation security officers to assess security at overseas airports in the wake of concerns raised about many Middle East and North African airports used by British tourists.

“There are stories of pilots having nail files removed from overnight bags because they could be used as weapons. The fact that pilots were actually flying the plane did not seem to make a difference”

It is planned that the additional aviation security officers will provide assessments of security at airports around the world. Aviation security has a budget of only £9m a year because the bulk of the cost is borne by airports and airlines.

The government employs 20 aviation security liaison officers, with eight based overseas. A number have said that the massive cuts to the regular police are damaging the front line in the domestic battle against terrorists.

The European Union also has a say in security at airports. Its regulations apply to all airports and operators, including air carriers providing services.

While heightened security activity is good for the protection of those using airports and airlines, those who gain their livelihood through aviation must not be ignored.

Engineers, aircrew and others are severely affected. They need to be vetted to a high standard but they clearly have very different security clearance and needs and so regulation needs to take account of this.



European Commission launches new aviation package

Safety, employment practices, the Single European Sky initiative, drones and security are all covered in a European Commission aviation strategy launched in December

THE NEW EC aviation strategy sets out priorities for strengthening competitiveness and sustainability in the EU.

Commission priorities are:

- tapping into growth markets while ensuring a level playing field
- tackling limits to growth in the air and on the ground
- maintaining high EU safety and security standards
- progressing innovation and technology.

Other areas where the EU also wishes to take action include the "social agenda", passenger rights and climate change policy.

The commission wants to see progress in aviation growth markets outside the EU such as in the Middle and Far East.

It said progress had already been made through EU-wide agreements with countries such as the US, Canada and Brazil.

The commission argues that better outcomes can be achieved by allowing the EU to negotiate as opposed to individual member states. This also aids promotion of common safety standards.

The EU is also keen to ensure "fair play" in the aviation markets by ensuring that EU airlines remain competitive and that unfair practices by third countries or third country operators are tackled.

Another key element in the package is for the commission to push ahead with the Single European Sky initiative which, it says, seeks to make air traffic management in the EU more efficient and to reduce fragmentation.

The commission argues that progress needs to be continued and that the SES2+ legislative proposals (tabled in 2013) must be adopted. Together with this package, the question of airport capacity and

charging will also be examined.

It is proposed that the European Aviation Safety Agency be given greater powers. This is intended to reduce duplication and allow member states to transfer oversight powers to EASA or another member state if appropriate.

There is also a desire to move to a more risk and performance based approach to regulation where, it is claimed, regulation can be made more proportionate and efficient.

Security at airports will also be reviewed to improve passenger flow. Security arrangements for transfer passengers will get special attention.

The commission says it has recognised the importance of social dialogue in developing aviation in the EU and recognises that the creation of high quality jobs is an important step in achieving its aims.

It said it would continue to support social dialogue and publish a guide to law in this area. Employment practices of some airlines and where they are based with respect to national employment law will also be examined. The commission will consider if further guidelines or regulations are needed to ensure clarity.

Drones have received much coverage in the press and the commission plans to provide a legal framework for their operation. EASA will be tasked with providing detailed rules.

National aviation group representatives will now consider the proposals in detail and, through the European Transport Workers Federation, as well as at national level, seek to influence the development of the package to ensure that their members' interests are best served.

● See the package here: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-6144_en.htm

'Mono-male' airlines will lose ground to younger rivals

LONG-ESTABLISHED AIRLINES risk losing out to the younger low-cost carriers unless they break their "mono-male" culture, according to a study by the headhunters Egon Zehnder.

The report warns that if the world's biggest airlines do not shake up their heavily male, top-heavy management structures and bring in more diverse talent, they will continue to lose business to the low-cost carriers, which have been outperforming them.

Citing easyJet's hiring of Carolyn McCall as chief executive, EZ's Christoph Wahl said that low-cost carriers were more diverse and performed better.

"This raises the question whether diversity of leadership tends to foster a spirit and culture in favour of fresh ideas, openness towards change as well as agility in taking fast decisions," he said.

The study found that the older, established airlines were dominated by male former engineers or pilots who had been in the industry for most of their careers. "The managements are inward-looking and often a handful of insiders make most of the decisions. All industry needs fresh talent and fresh ideas," Mr Wahl said.

Less than 13% of top executives in the industry are female and most are in PR or human resources.

The other female airline bosses are Jayne Hrdlicka of Jetstar and Claudia Sender of Brazil's TAM.



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FAIR TRANSPORT EUROPE CAMPAIGN



Prospect is calling on members to back a European Transport Workers' Federation campaign – Fair Transport Europe – for fair employment practices and rewarding and high quality jobs. **Aaron Curtis reports**

THE ETF says “the race to the bottom” on pay and conditions in the aviation industry is a real threat. The campaign is designed to raise awareness and push for better regulations to protect workers.

ETF is using a European citizens' initiative to seek to put its proposals to the European Commission.

An initiative is an invitation to the commission to propose legislation. It must be backed by at least a million EU citizens from at least seven member states, with a minimum number of signatories from each state.

The ETF proposals are to:

1. Set up a working group with representatives from “recognised social partners” like trade unions in the transport sector to discuss measures to ensure the effective implementation of the Posting of Workers Directive 96/71/EC. It covers workers employed in one EU member state but sent to work on a temporary basis in another member state. This would be in the framework of a labour mobility package due to be presented by the end of 2015.
2. Propose strong EU legislation to prevent the creation of “letter-box”

companies.

3. Expand control and enforcement mechanisms to ensure uniform implementation and enforcement of existing employment and social legislation in transport, including the Enforcement Directive 2014/67/EU. This directive established methods to ensure better and more uniform implementation of Directive 96/71/EC, including measures to sanction abuse and circumvention of its rules. These would include:

- a European platform for all relevant monitoring and labour inspections
 - pursuit of greater harmonisation of sanctions and fines
 - a directive on minimum standards for labour inspection, based on an International Labour Organisation convention.
4. Propose rules to end abusive forms of precarious work such as zero-hour contracts and bogus self-employment.
 5. Propose rules to establish joint and several liability in subcontracting chains.
 6. Amend Directive 2001/23/EC on transfers of undertakings to include change of ownership in case

of mergers, takeovers and public procurement and to clarify the concept of “economic entity” to extend the benefits of the directive to workers in case of calls for tenders or partial loss of activity.

7. Work towards a broad recognition of a European definition of “social dumping” – the practice of employers using low-paid migrant workers or moving production to a low-wage country or area.

What you can do

We need your help to collect the 1 million signatures! This would allow the ETF to put the points above to the EC.

Any EU citizen can sign, so please encourage colleagues, family and friends to sign too.

The website has a lot of information on the campaign and a FAQ section giving more details.

Please sign the petition and help secure the future for European Transport workers.

- Taking part is easy. Visit www.fairtransporteurope.eu and fill in the simple online form to enter your signature.



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