

# THE AIRPORT OPERATOR

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE AIRPORT OPERATORS ASSOCIATION

## TAG FARNBOROUGH

*The UK's booming  
business airport*

**AOA**  
THE VOICE OF UK AIRPORTS  
**SUMMER 2018**

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THE AIRPORT  
**OPERATOR**

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*A very  
warm  
welcome  
to the  
summer  
edition  
of the*

*Airport Operator,  
published to coincide with  
our annual reception at  
the House of Commons.*

These are exciting and challenging times for UK airports. We have seen the National Policy Statement on Heathrow laid in Parliament, further progress on the Aviation Strategy and a new Government statement on making best use of existing capacity. All these things show that the Government is going in the right direction. The AOA's job now is to help shape that and make sure that the Government delivers an ambitious strategy for growth that enables us to support the economy as we approach Brexit.

Many of our airports continue to report record passenger numbers, but there are also some warning signs flashing to which the Government should pay attention. Our pan-European trade association, ACI Europe, has just published a new report on connectivity for airports across the European Union and its findings are striking.

The UK is the only country in the report where direct connectivity is not growing. Every other country's airports report continuing growth and the UK itself had seen growth until last year, when Heathrow, for example, saw 7% growth. But now that growth is no longer being recorded and it is a worrying sign. There are several reasons why UK airports are finding it increasingly difficult to deliver the connectivity that will support our economy and they certainly include Brexit

uncertainty, capacity constraints and Air Passenger Duty.

Faced with this challenge, UK airports need political support. We need more certainty about what the deal for aviation will be after Brexit. Even more than that we need the Government to focus on what it can do domestically to support airports in their growth plans. That would ensure that we don't slip behind at just the time when connectivity will be more important than ever to facilitate the trade and investment on which our economy depends.

When Karen Dee and her colleagues in the AOA team talk to Ministers and officials, particularly about Brexit, they find an impressive level of understanding about the issues that need to be resolved and the outcomes that would make a positive difference and we appreciate that. We recognise also that they face multiple challenges and conflicting pressures. Nevertheless, if the UK aviation sector is to continue to be one of the UK's success stories, it will require a supportive policy environment from Government and we will continue to work hard to secure that.

One of the messages that we are always keen to get across relates to the diversity of UK airports and the importance of ensuring that Government policies appropriately reflect that mix. As you read this edition of our magazine you will get a very good flavour of that diversity as our interviews with the Chief Executives of East Midlands, Glasgow, Liverpool John Lennon and TAG Farnborough Airports convey the huge variety of opportunities and challenges that they face.

I hope that you will enjoy reading those interviews, as well as articles on Airports Safety Week, our 2018 Security Conference and our new report that sets out our views on what needs to be done to ensure that passengers arriving at UK airports will encounter a smooth and improved Border, whether they are visiting us for leisure or business.

*Ed Anderson, AOA Chairman*

# THE AOA IS PLEASED TO WORK WITH ITS CORPORATE PARTNERS, AND GOLD AND SILVER MEMBERS

## Corporate Partners







## Gold Members






## Silver Members












































# BUSINESS BOOMS AT UK'S ONLY DEDICATED BUSINESS AVIATION AIRPORT

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*Business aviation airport, TAG Farnborough, has recorded its busiest day on record – as US jet manufacturer, Gulfstream, announced plans to build a new aircraft service centre at the airport.*



The record-breaking day for jet movements at the airport on 25 May followed a period between January and April this year when flight movements were up 20% compared to the same period last year.

TAG Farnborough CEO, Brandon O'Reilly, attributes his airport's recent success to three factors: international entrepreneurs investigating new business opportunities in the UK as the country prepares for Brexit, the squeezing out of business aviation from London's largest commercial airports and regular closures to civilian traffic at RAF Northolt, which must prioritise military requirements.

O'Reilly says that, following an earlier peak around the London Olympics in 2012, TAG Farnborough's traffic was largely stable until the Brexit referendum in 2016 "when we started to see quite a marked upturn in business aviation". He speculates that this might have been partly linked to the fall in the value of sterling and partly because "the type of people who use the airport are always seeking business opportunities ahead of the curve and the referendum result created change opportunities".

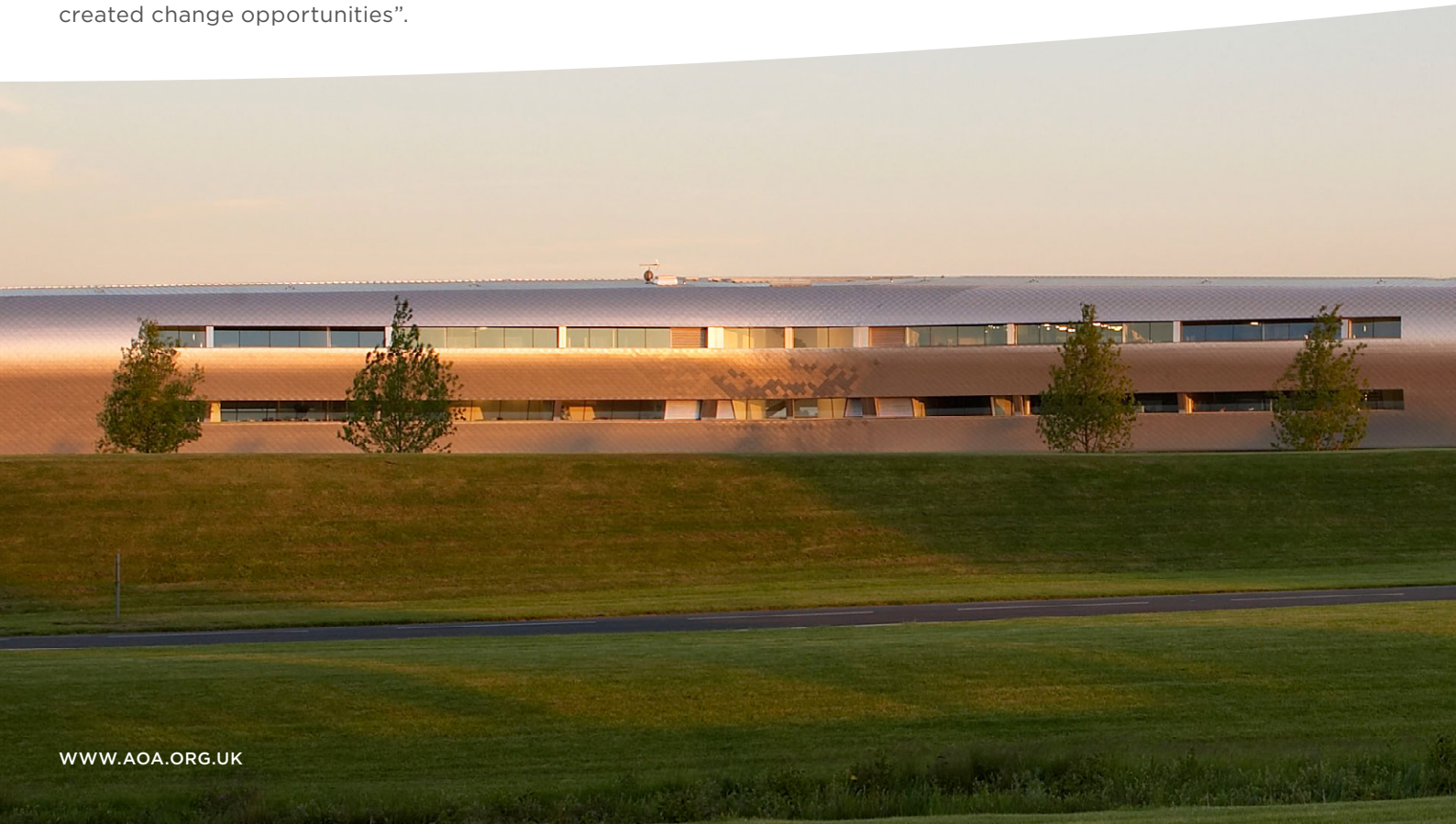


The squeezing out of business aviation from London's largest airports, Heathrow and Gatwick, has been a long-term trend, but O'Reilly suggests that this could now also be beginning to be a factor at other London area airports, such as Luton, which has historically been the UK's busiest airport for private jets.

RAF Northolt's VIP private jet terminal has long been prized by its customers for its proximity to central London and its use by visiting heads of state. In the past over

80% of its movements were private jet movements, but now, O'Reilly says, "there are regular closures at Northolt for civilian traffic. Civil aviation is being pushed away. That is the present position and there is no sign of it changing".

Along with Biggin Hill and Oxford, TAG Farnborough, with its plentiful spare capacity is in a good position to benefit. The airport markets itself as "a one-stop shop for business aviation" and sees that claim being



*“We welcome this investment, which will benefit the regional economy and underpin the airport’s role in supporting jobs and economic development. As Europe’s leading business aviation airport and a London gateway, we are well-placed to meet the specific requirements of Gulfstream and its customers.”*

strengthened by the announcement from Gulfstream that it has decided to construct a new, larger, purpose-built maintenance, repair and overhaul operation at TAG Farnborough. The new service centre, which will be up to 220,000 square feet and will include a new hangar able to accommodate up to 13 large business jets, is set to open in 2020.

Gulfstream said it had chosen TAG Farnborough because the London area has the highest volume of Gulfstream traffic in Europe and

“because TAG Farnborough is a London gateway airport dedicated exclusively to business aviation”. O’Reilly echoed that explanation. He said: “We welcome this investment, which will benefit the regional economy and underpin the airport’s role in supporting jobs and economic development. As Europe’s leading business aviation airport and a London gateway, we are well-placed to meet the specific requirements of Gulfstream and its customers”.

The current run of good news at TAG Farnborough is something of a contrast to the situation that O’Reilly found himself in shortly after arriving as CEO in 2006. Farnborough was the UK’s first operational airfield, established in 1905. Originally a Government airfield, it was declared surplus to requirements by the Ministry of Defence in 1991 and had been in the process of development since 2000. A new terminal building had just been completed. Further developments were being planned when the global financial crisis hit. Aircraft movements at TAG Farnborough plummeted from 28,000 a year to 23,000. “We had to take stock” he said “Our owners are long-term investors. We took the decision to assess the market and we waited until just before 2010 to start work again on a further round of infrastructure investment”.





A total investment of £200 million has created an award-winning airport that is well-placed to deliver what O'Reilly describes as “a five-star service to customers and crew with no compromise” and, not least, the one thing that customers value more than anything else: speed. Visitors to the airport who are used to large commercial airports will look in vain for check-in desks, baggage carousels or duty-free

shopping. Passengers flying in to TAG Farnborough can have their passports checked by Border Force on their aircraft before stepping in to their car waiting for them at the foot of the aircraft steps and speeding off to their destination. That is most frequently towards London on the newly-upgraded four-lane M3 which, following a £174 million investment, now provides a faster link from Farnborough to London.

The fact that Farnborough's passengers are generally keen to see as little of the airport as possible presents some unique business challenges. The kind of non-aeronautical revenues on which many other airports depend (such as retail, car parking and advertising) are simply not available. Instead the airport makes its money from a combination of landing, handling and aircraft parking fees, fuel sales and office and property rental.



There is, though, one thing that is the same – neighbours concerned about aircraft noise. When O'Reilly arrived in 2006 one of his first tasks was to meet residents and he found that most had two complaints – noise itself and the fact that they had little or no idea about the airport's future intentions. Though not legally required to do so, he set out to deal with this second issue by consulting on, developing and publishing a masterplan. The 2009 masterplan set out proposals



for operational improvements to 2019 (and indicatively to 2030). It provided the basis for TAG Farnborough's planning application to increase permitted annual business aviation air traffic movements from 28,000 to 50,000 by 2019, an application that was granted by the Government in 2010.

On noise, O'Reilly took the radical step of inviting residents' representatives to join him and the TAG Farnborough team in designing aircraft routes that would be safe, would meet the needs of the airport's customers and would reflect as far as possible the principal noise concerns of the people living around the airport. The resulting Farnborough quiet flying programme and continuing local engagement have been key factors in reducing noise complaints to the lowest on record, even as flight numbers continue to rise.

*“A total investment of £200 million has created an award-winning airport that is well-placed to deliver what O'Reilly describes as “a five-star service to customers and crew with no compromise.”*

For people who don't live near the airport and who don't routinely travel by private jet, Farnborough is most famous for its international air show, which combines a weekday trade show for the international aerospace industry with a weekend flying exhibition for the public. It is being held this year from 16 to 22 July, when TAG Farnborough will close its airspace to its normal jet

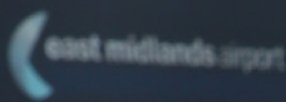
set customers each afternoon as the air display takes place. O'Reilly concludes that this year, as ever, the brief disruption will be well worth it because of the unique biennial opportunity that it provides to show case his growing business aviation airport to a global business audience. ■





Welcome to  
East Midlands  
Airport

[www.eastmidlandsairport.com](http://www.eastmidlandsairport.com)



# NEW EAST MIDLANDS MANAGING DIRECTOR IS AMBITIOUS FOR PASSENGER AND CARGO GROWTH

*East Midlands Airport is “a hidden gem”, with huge potential for both passenger and cargo growth, according to its new Managing Director, Karen Smart.*

**S**mart, who took up her role in April, sees scope for growth in business passengers and huge opportunities for the airport’s cargo services to benefit from the boom in internet shopping.

A key goal for both business and leisure passengers is to improve connectivity by securing a European hub link. Copenhagen, Amsterdam and Paris are all in her sights, but the likeliest new connection appears to be to the German market, with ambitions for a new route to Frankfurt, Munich or Berlin. Currently East Midlands has

almost 5 million passengers a year, but the airport aims to double this to 10 million a year.

Connectivity for passengers on the ground is also a key priority, with Smart seeking to persuade the Government that new rail franchise negotiations offer an opportunity to significantly improve the frequency of rail links between nearby East Midlands Parkway and London St Pancras. The current timetable leaves Parkway without a service for up to 40 minutes of every hour and the two trains each hour to

London depart within a few minutes of each other.

Looking further ahead, Smart is a strong supporter of a planned new railway station on the Leeds branch of High Speed 2.

The airport says that the proposed station at Toton, situated between Nottingham and Derby, would provide the East Midlands region with “the most connected station on the high-speed network outside London”. In Smart’s view, “the Government must now match its support for Heathrow with specific and practical proposals to maximise East Midlands Airport’s global connectivity in the period to 2030, including support for better rail connectivity serving East Midland Parkway and backing regional transport infrastructure to link the proposed HS2 Toton to the airport”.

*“East Midlands is already the UK’s busiest pure cargo airport and second only to Heathrow in terms of the total tonnage of cargo that passes through it annually.”*



East Midlands is already the UK's busiest pure cargo airport and second only to Heathrow in terms of the total tonnage of cargo that passes through it annually – around 360,000 tonnes, but the goal is to triple freight shipments to 1 million tonnes annually within the next 10 to 20 years.

Smart points to the airport's geographical position at the heart

of the UK economy – over 90% of the UK's population is within 4 hours' drive of the airport – as a key asset. She reckons that much of the expected growth in freight services will come from the flourishing e-commerce market and especially from the overnight express cargo market that provides the next-day delivery service that online customers have come to expect.

Her confidence would seem to be justified by the actual and planned growth of the major freight companies. The airport is the national hub for DHL, who have doubled the size of their local operations. In March this year UPS secured permission for a £114 million parcels depot that will create 1,400 jobs on a site between the airport and the M1.



New jobs at and around the airport will require new skills and Smart is keen to look at ways of ensuring that local people have access to the training that will equip them to take on new jobs. She points to the pioneering work at the airport she has just left, Stansted, to set up a new on-site college which will open this September and, she says, "that could be something we start to look at here". There could be a focus on science, technology, engineering and maths and an effort to attract more women to study those



subjects – a cause about which Smart says she has “a real passion”.

All the expected growth in freight traffic will inevitably mean more noise and the airport is currently consulting on a refreshed noise action plan, which sets out how East Midlands aims to limit and, where possible, reduce the number of people affected by noise from its operation. A new generation of quieter aircraft should make a big difference and the airport already operates a scheme which obliges airlines operating noisier aircraft to pay a levy, with the funds raised going to support local community projects.

Smart signalled the importance that she attaches to community relations by hosting a meeting with local parish councils within two weeks of starting the job, listening to their concerns not only about aircraft noise, but also about other issues such as airport-related construction

*“The Government must now match its support for Heathrow with specific and practical proposals to maximise East Midlands Airport’s global connectivity in the period to 2030”*

work and villages disturbed by taxi drivers waiting to pick up airport passengers. She promised a new effort to tackle that problem by giving greater publicity to the holding area at East Midlands where drivers can wait for up to an hour free of charge.

It must all seem quite a distance from Smart’s first jobs as an RAF engineer and air traffic controller at RAF Lyneham in Wiltshire. A spell at public services provider, SERCO, followed, before she joined MAG in 2014. She was Customer Services & Security Director at Stansted, before being promoted to Director of Landside Operations. Asked about the main difference between her RAF work and her more recent work for civilian airports, she points to a difference of focus, with day-to-day operational excellence being the key driver at the RAF, contrasting with a much greater focus on commercial success and customer service in her roles at both Stansted and East Midlands Airports.

Listening to Smart speak with knowledge and enthusiasm about the challenges and opportunities at East Midlands Airport, just weeks into her new role, it is not hard to see why, when MAG’s Group CEO, Charlie Cornish announced her appointment, he described her as “an exceptional leader” and forecast with confidence that she would “build on the great foundations that exist at East Midlands Airport”. ■

# GLASGOW AIRPORT STARTS FIGHT BACK AFTER RYANAIR BLOW

*Glasgow Airport has won a new daily Lufthansa link with Frankfurt and new Jet2.com routes to Bulgaria and Turkey as it begins a fight back following Ryanair's decision to axe 20 routes from the airport and to close its Glasgow base.*

A milestone agreement between Glasgow Airport and Shanghai Airport Authority, the fruit of months of discussions, has also opened the prospect of the first direct link between the west of Scotland and Shanghai, which would be a significant addition to Glasgow's established long-haul routes to the United States, Canada and the Middle East.

Glasgow's new Managing Director, Mark Johnston, who took up his position in June, says the airport is operating in "a challenging marketplace", but is committed to ensuring that it delivers the connectivity that will support the wider Scottish economy.

Johnston's appointment was part of a series of management changes at AGS Airports, the owner of Glasgow, Aberdeen and Southampton Airports. Derek Provan, formerly interim Chief Operating Officer at Heathrow, stepped up from the Glasgow MD role to focus solely on his strategic role as Chief Executive Officer of AGS and Neil Garwood became the new Managing Director at Southampton.



*Derek Provan, Chief Executive Officer, AGS Airports Ltd*

A key part of Provan's role will be to engage in a dialogue with the politicians who help to shape the environment in which Glasgow and the other airports operate. He told Airport Operator that finding a way to cut Air Passenger Duty in Scotland, securing certainty for aviation after Brexit and winning a tram-train link for Glasgow Airport are top of the agenda in his discussions with the Holyrood and Westminster governments.

Ryanair blamed high levels of APD for its February decision to close its Glasgow Airport base and cut the number of routes it operates from the airport from 23 to three. The company said at the time that its announcement "should not come as a surprise to the Scottish Government. We did say that our growth in Glasgow was based on their promise to abolish APD, which morphed into a promise to halve APD, which

suddenly has disappeared into the ether and quite frankly we don't have any more patience". Ryanair also said that Brexit was a background factor in its decision.

There had been "a level of expectation" among airlines, Provan said, that the Scottish Government would replace APD with an Airport Departure Tax that would be 50% lower. The announcement that there is no immediate prospect of this happening because of unresolved legal issues relating to the continuing exemption of Highlands and Islands airports from the tax had created a much more challenging environment for airlines in Scotland.

Provan said his key message to the Governments in both Edinburgh and London was that "they have to work together" to resolve the problem. He said he understood that it was difficult for both sides, with the Scottish Government saying that that they could not adopt a taxation system that currently doesn't have EU approval. Nevertheless, he argued, it should be possible to find a judicial or fiscal solution if the two Governments are genuine in their expressed desire to work together to resolve the issue.

On Brexit, Provan said that the continuing "lack of certainty" on what the rules for airlines will be after the UK leaves the European Union was "becoming quite a challenge". A greater level of certainty would help airlines to plan, since at present they could only "plan for the worst and hope for the best". He suggested that the UK Government should prioritise an agreement with the EU on aviation because of the key role that the sector plays in facilitating global business.

On surface access to Glasgow Airport, Provan noted that Glasgow is one of the only major UK airports that has only road access, much of it on a heavily congested M8, which was "obviously a constraint on growth". He could be forgiven a sense

*"Glasgow Airport is operating in "a challenging marketplace", but is committed to ensuring that it delivers the connectivity that will support the wider Scottish economy."*

of having been here before. Provan started his aviation career at Glasgow in 1998 and when he left after ten years the airport had seemed close to securing a rail link. That project had been abandoned on cost grounds, but now there is renewed hope that a train-tram project could finally be given the green light. The new project had gone through a feasibility study and was fully funded. Provan said: "our message to the Scottish Government is 'let's get on with this'. The surface access to Glasgow Airport is clearly inadequate".

Having been frank about the challenges facing Glasgow Airport, Provan is also keen to highlight successes. The new daily Lufthansa service from Glasgow to Frankfurt, combined with the five times per week Lufthansa service to Munich, the Eurowings route to Dusseldorf and the EasyJet link to Berlin enhance the airport's connections to Europe's biggest economy. Lufthansa said: "We have been able to increase Lufthansa's flight offer at Glasgow from a single weekly service to 12 flights a week in just six months. This level of growth is almost unprecedented and underlines the importance of Glasgow Airport within

the Lufthansa worldwide network". Provan's view is that: "to get the German national flag carrier operating from your airport is a real feather in your cap. It demonstrates confidence in the city and in the airport".

On the leisure side of the business, Glasgow Airport has also been boosted by Jet2.com's decision to base a seventh aircraft there from next year and to launch two new destinations from Glasgow Airport in 2019 to Bourgas, the gateway to the Bulgarian Black Sea resort of Sunny Beach, and to Izmir in Turkey.

Looking further ahead, Provan is hopeful that Glasgow Airport's new memorandum of understanding with Shanghai Airport Authority, combined with a more liberal approach by the Chinese authorities to aviation links to the UK, will eventually open the door to a direct air link between Glasgow Airport and China's biggest city.

Commenting briefly on the other airports in the AGS portfolio, Provan said that Aberdeen is two thirds of the way through its £20 million investment programme that will transform the passenger facilities with a 50% increase in the size of the terminal. Last year saw the opening of a new space for arrivals, followed by the opening this summer of a larger and enhanced security search area. The project will be completed next summer with the opening of an expanded departure lounge.

Provan also has high expectations for Southampton following the promotion of Head of Operations, Neil Garwood, to the Managing Director role there. The airport is working to deliver its Master Plan and Provan said that there will be a focus on how Southampton can capture a larger share of the flights taken by the three and a half million people who live within an hour's drive of the airport, many of whom currently travel to either Heathrow or Gatwick. ■

# SOCIAL MEDIA EXPERIENCE HOLDS THE KEY TO B2B COMMUNICATION IN AIR TRANSPORT

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*Yves Tuet, CEO and Co-Founder, Deolan*



**R**emember when you had to phone all your friends from a landline phone one-by-one to organise a get-together? Maybe – or maybe not, depending on your age! But taking the time today to do something as simple as coordinating a meeting point is unthinkable for most of us. Now, we're spoilt for choice when it comes to digital tools that help us to communicate and collaborate with our social circles, from social networks like Facebook to messaging apps such as Whatsapp and Telegram.

We can find most of our contacts on the same platforms, so it's easy to send a message, post an update, or invite numerous people to an event. You can see at a glance who has responded, keep track of what everybody has said and search back at a later date if you need to. How often do you need to make a phone call, or even send an email, nowadays?

But when many of us arrive at work, it's a completely different story – particularly if you work in air transport. The number of individuals

and teams involved in turning flights around is much more complicated than organising a get-together with your friends, yet in most cases, the technology provided is siloed, cumbersome and old-fashioned.

The numerous teams and systems involved in managing a single flight means that exchanging, sharing and storing information in an efficient way is almost impossible. A lack of functionality to deal with different business contexts and situations means that inevitably, email, phone calls and walkie-talkie conversations fill the gaps. That brings a huge risk of information getting lost, recorded incorrectly or missed by the very teams and individuals who need to be informed.

All this inefficiency is one of the key reasons why the air transport industry isn't performing as well as it should, whether in terms of profitability, passenger satisfaction or customer retention. Airlines lose eight per cent of their revenues every year due to flight delays, and six per cent more through unsatisfied customers. The latest IATA Passenger Survey found that a mere 52% of European



*“The number of individuals and teams involved in turning flights around is much more complicated than organising a get-together with your friends, yet in most cases, the technology provided is siloed, cumbersome and old-fashioned.”*

passengers were satisfied with their last travel experience.

Delays are of course hugely frustrating for customers, particularly when they can be avoided, but that isn't the only issue. Passengers today want real-time information and digital services when they arrive at the airport, such as SMS alerts, real-time messages and smartphone apps – the kind of technology that they're accustomed to in many other settings. In the IATA survey, two thirds of passengers (63%) said real-time information would improve the travel disruption experience.

But this kind of service won't become a reality if those on the front line aren't able to share, collect and deliver real-time, consistent data amongst their teams and partners. On one side, you have a digitally-savvy customer with a smartphone, waiting for instant notifications about changes, disruptions or additional services. And on the other, you have an operational member of staff, who's producing 80 per cent of the critical data by communicating on a walkie-talkie, over the phone or corresponding via email, and therefore unable to produce the real time structured data required to truly improve the passenger experience.

Yet, outside work, these same individuals are able to synchronise and collaborate with a huge, flexible network of friends and relatives, using technology with easy-to-use, intuitive interfaces. They can share rich content, comment on, share and interact with existing posts and record information to look at later. It begs the question – when this technology already exists, why are

interfaces and applications in air transport so far behind?

Some may argue that the barriers to introducing social media style technology to air transport are too great, particularly when it comes to security. It's true that information must be shared, stored and protected in a secure manner, and that access rights management must be one of the main features of the system. But this isn't insurmountable and numerous consumer-facing applications have mastered this without breaches (the latest Facebook data issues notwithstanding). Why should B2B applications be any different?

Other naysayers might point out that social tools are too simplistic for B2B situations, without the contextualisation that is needed. Surely a wall or chat room shared by many agents and many systems would be 200km long given the amount of data and information exchanged. However, that doesn't mean that a solution can't be found, by drawing on sector expertise and incorporating sub-workflows that make the data manageable.

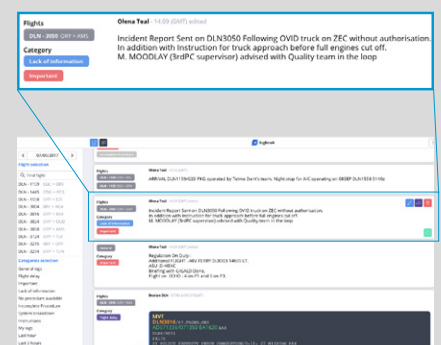
Social media style collaboration tools are beginning to make inroads into the air transport sector, but a change of mindset is also essential. There is no reason why these applications have to be complicated and hard to use. Taking a lesson or two from the likes of Facebook or Whatsapp will ensure better collaboration between teams, happier and more engaged employees, improved performance and a better experience for the passenger. ■

## CASE STUDY:

### *Boosting efficiency, productivity and the passenger experience at Biarritz Airport*

With more than one million passengers per year, Biarritz Airport was keen to improve the overall passenger experience, focusing on the role of communication, collaboration and information sharing on the ground. Its legacy IT systems housed information in various, disparate silos, which made sharing and collaboration extremely difficult. The Airport wanted to integrate these diverse IT systems through one platform to better manage airport activity and give passengers a smooth and enjoyable experience.

To do this, Biarritz turned to Deolan and its new collaboration tool, Logbook, providing a single plug and play platform for use across its airport teams. By centralising airport data into one social media style tool, the platform has given teams on the ground the ability to more easily and effectively share information from day one. The result is improved operational efficiency, productivity and communication across the airport, plus a more seamless and integrated experience for passengers.





# NEW LIVERPOOL AIRPORT CEO AIMS HIGH

*John Irving doesn't lack ambition for his airport – the new boss of Liverpool John Lennon says that he and his team are aiming to provide “the best customer experience in the UK”*

Irving, who moved from Newcastle Airport to take on the CEO role at the self-styled “faster, easier, friendlier” Liverpool Airport in March this year, has the confidence that comes from joining an airport that has a strong existing track-record. It was voted “the UK’s friendliest airport” by Cheapflights.co.uk and tagged by travel intelligence company, OAG, as the only airport in the north of England to achieve a five-star rating for punctuality.

The airport has seen growth in passenger numbers of over 25% since 2014, with 5 million passengers per year now choosing to use Liverpool. It has announced ambitious plans to serve more destinations, including long haul, with passenger forecasts indicating the potential to grow passenger numbers to 7.8 million by 2030 – fuelled by a planned investment of £100 million over the next ten years, including a proposed expansion of the terminal building and a potential extension of the runway.



Irving, who was previously Chief Commercial Officer at Newcastle Airport, says that his first impressions at Liverpool John Lennon have been very positive, noting especially that: “the people are very passionate and very proud to work here and that rubs off on the customer experience”.

That emphasis on the quality of the customer experience mirrors the approach adopted at Newcastle, but there is an important difference between the two airports. From Newcastle it is two and a half hours to any other major airport. By contrast, Manchester Airport – “the global gateway to the North of England” –

is just 35 miles down the road from Liverpool John Lennon and offers a choice and frequency of routes to and from the UK unmatched outside London and the South East.

Irving acknowledges that Manchester “has done an excellent job and will continue to do so”, but firmly rejects the suggestion that this puts a natural cap on Liverpool’s growth. He notes that Liverpool John Lennon operates in the second largest catchment area in the UK and suggests that the airport has yet to reach the full potential offered by this very wide catchment area.

He forecasts that Liverpool will continue to grow by offering an unrivalled customer experience, combined with enhanced connections to some major holiday destinations, such as Turkey and the Canaries. Another key to growth will be the development of “the right connection through a European hub”, hinting that either Germany or Heathrow might provide that. “A route to Heathrow would be on the list”, he says, “but we are realistic about timing. It is one for the future”.

Meanwhile the airport is consolidating its relationship with its two leading airlines, Ryanair and easyJet. Ryanair’s 33 routes from the airport now include new routes to Shannon in the west of Ireland and Paphos in Cyprus. easyJet is adding new routes to Croatia, Turkey and Italy and basing an eighth aircraft at the airport from the end of 2018. Both Blue

*“Liverpool will continue to grow by offering an unrivalled customer experience, combined with enhanced connections to some major holiday destinations, such as Turkey and the Canaries.”*



Air and TUI have also announced new routes. Irving is confident that these routes will help to propel the passenger numbers up to over 5.1 million in the coming year and sees 6 million as an achievable target “in the coming years”.

Responding to a question about potential obstacles to continuing growth, Irving cites the high level of Air Passenger Duty and uncertainty over the Brexit process, emphasising the vital importance of airlines securing clarification on this as soon as possible. By contrast, the airport’s growth would accelerate in the future, he suggests, if it were able to secure a direct rail link.

He emphasises that the Government’s developing Aviation Strategy offers an important opportunity, which Ministers should seize, to underline the key role that

*“Liverpool has announced ambitious plans to serve more destinations, including long haul, with passenger forecasts indicating the potential to grow passenger numbers to 7.8 million by 2030 – fuelled by a planned investment of £100 million over the next ten years, including a proposed expansion of the terminal building and a potential extension of the runway.”*

regional airports like Liverpool can play both to meet rising passenger demand and to boost the economic fortunes of the regions that they serve. Liverpool John Lennon, he concludes, stands ready to rise to

the challenge: “We are growing; we have new routes and, hopefully, new carriers on the way. We are in a good place”. ■





# SECURITY UPDATES FOR AIRPORTS FROM GOVERNMENT AND REGULATOR

*AOA members attending the Association's 2018 Security Conference were given insider updates from the Department for Transport and the Civil Aviation Authority on current security threats and how they are being met.*

**T**he conference, held at Slaley Hall, Hexham, on 30 April and 1 May, received a confidential update on the latest threat picture from Robert Loades, Deputy Head of Risk Analysis & Incident Response at the Department for Transport.

His Departmental colleague, Richard Rose, Head of Domestic Aviation Security Policy & Regulation, gave an update on policy developments. He said that the Department is in the process of producing new guidance for the issuance of airside passes, which he described as an important step in combatting insider threat risks. This is ahead of the proposed national database of airside passholders, which is in development.

Rose also highlighted the Department's work on an Aviation Security Strategy, which will provide airports and other partners with a comprehensive, classified account of Government plans, setting five-year priorities with annual reviews.

From the Civil Aviation Authority, Phil Dykins, Head of Aviation

Security Regulation, said that the threat picture had never been greater and as sustained as it had been in the last three years, but in response he said that the UK had developed one of the most robust security regimes in the world.

He heralded the introduction of new cabin baggage scanning technology and forecast that the Government would mandate its introduction in the coming years. Looking ahead, Dykins said he expected that data-driven risk assessments and threat analysis would increasingly inform passenger screening. On perimeter security he said that the CAA will consult with airports on developing individual perimeter protection plans (including CCTV, patrols and fences) and these would be supported by CAA guidance and supervision.

From the private sector, Philip Baum, Managing Director of Green Light Ltd, urged airports to recognise that, while technology, is a helpful component of a security regime, they should also consider adopting a proactive approach

which would place greater emphasis on behavioural analysis and ensure that more attention was paid to issues such as mental health.

Among airport contributions to the conference, Heathrow's Security Programmes Project Manager, Katy van den Dries, outlined the explosive detection cabin baggage scanner being trialled in Terminal 2's transfers area over the coming year before final purchase decisions are made.

A smaller airports panel, including representatives from Durham Tees Valley, Humberside, Jersey, the Isle of Man and Southampton, discussed a wide range of security issues affecting them and made a plea to the Department for Transport and the CAA to listen to the voice of smaller airports and to ensure that consultations were more than just notifications.

Issues covered by other contributors included explosive detection dogs, smart security programmes, the EU's General Data Protection Regulation and the aviation security implications of Brexit. ■

# AOA LAUNCHES FOUR-POINT PLAN FOR “A STEP-CHANGE AT THE BORDER”

*The Airport Operators Association is calling on the Government to act to deal with a “below par” Border Force service that is generating widespread passenger dissatisfaction. The call is made in a new AOA report, “Towards a smooth and improved Border”, that sets out in detail “what’s broken” at the Border and what should be done to fix it.*

## The report says that:

- Border Force resources are insufficient to meet growing demand
- Performance targets mask poor performance
- The targets are out of touch with consumer expectations
- There is a lack of accountability for performance
- Technology is used inefficiently
- There is a lack of clarity over investment responsibilities



In a foreword to the report, AOA Chief Executive, Karen Dee, says that: “With the UK preparing to transition out of the European Union, the Border will be centre stage in our future relationship with the wider world. The frontier will have a starring role to play in Britain’s pitch to attract businesses and tourism from across the world”. The AOA report makes it clear that “there is still some work to be done before the Border is ready to handle the challenges of the future”.

New data in the AOA report from a ComRes passenger survey suggests that most UK passengers expect

to be through the border within 12 minutes and they expect non-European Economic Area (EEA) passengers to be processed within 22 minutes. That stands in stark contrast to existing Border Force waiting time targets of 25 minutes for EEA passengers and 45 minutes for non-EEA passengers. The survey also shows that many passengers think that airports, rather than Government, are responsible for their experience at the Border.

UK airports report that Border Force resources are insufficient to meet growing demand and that the service provided by Border Force is failing

to meet targets and expectations. The report offers examples of this from across the country. In July 2017 there were almost 2,000 non-EEA service level breaches at Heathrow. In December 12.5% of non-EEA passengers had to wait over 45 minutes. The airport reports that “queues of two hours or more are now a once a month occurrence”. At Birmingham Border Force failed to meet its own 95% monthly threshold twice last year and in one case the maximum wait time was 72 minutes. At Newcastle Airport a survey of over 6,000 passengers revealed that queue times were the Border issue most in need of attention.



The report says that “airports continue to find Border Force’s service below par and have little visibility over its future plans. Border Force resources have decreased since 2012 while passenger numbers have increased, and this has led to a deterioration in the passenger experience”. Airports have expressed concern that cuts to Border Force funding make it much more difficult for service level agreement targets to be met, particularly during periods such as the summer, when passenger numbers are at their peak. Airports regularly experience

excessive queues in border halls in breach of service level agreements and these contribute to the dissatisfaction of passengers.

On Brexit the report says that there is an urgent need for clarity about the changes that may be required as a result. The AOA’s position is that Government should seek either to maintain the same entry-clearance system for EU nationals after Brexit or to work with airports to provide the extra capacity airports will require to meet changed demand. The report says that, if

free movement of people no longer applies, it is likely that changes to the Border regime for EEA nationals will be needed. The report says that: “This would require Border Force to commit significantly more resource to processing EEA and Swiss nationals and the increase in passport checks and processing times which would result could act as a deterrent to visitors from the EU”. There would also need to be additional space allocated to immigration control operations in airports, which would come at significant cost.

**The report concludes with “four clear asks of Government” designed to “achieve a step-change in performance”:**

- 1 Urgent clarity on post-Brexit Border arrangements. Government should seek either to maintain the same entry-clearance system for EU nationals after Brexit or to provide funding for the extra capacity airports will require to meet changed demand.
- 2 A clear, long term resource plan to meet the growth challenge, provide a clear welcome to the UK and meet passenger expectations. Border Force needs a long-term strategy with an accompanying budget to deliver the resources that will be needed.
- 3 A framework to encourage innovation. Government should provide a framework which allows them to work with the supply-side of industry to understand what new technologies and innovations might be practicable and to explore the circumstances under which they could be implemented.
- 4 Passenger-focussed performance metrics. The forthcoming Aviation Strategy process offers a prime opportunity for Government and industry to work together to explore new mechanisms for measuring performance at the border.



# The AOA Annual Conference 2018

29-30 OCTOBER 2018



## AIRPORT DRONE BAN COMES INTO FORCE

Drones will be banned from flying within a kilometre of UK airports from 30 July.

The change in legislation follows a year-on-year increase in the number of reported incidents involving drones and aircraft, up to 89 in 2017 compared to 71 in 2016.

From November next year pilots of drones weighing more than 250 grams will be required to register with the Civil Aviation Authority and take a test or face a £1,000 fine. A draft Drones Bill to be published shortly will give police more tailored powers to intervene on the spot if drones are being used inappropriately.

UK Aviation Minister, Baroness Sugg, said: "While we want this industry to innovate and grow, we need to protect planes, helicopters and their passengers from the increasing number of drones in



our skies. These new laws will help ensure drones are used safely and responsibly".

AOA Chief Executive, Karen Dee, welcomed the new laws as "an important step in the right direction", but she also called for the introduction of mandatory

geo-fencing as soon as possible to safeguard critical airspace around airports from accidental drone incursions. Geo-fencing uses technology to create a virtual geographical boundary, enabling software to trigger a response when a drone enters a defined area.

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## GLASGOW AIRPORT ADDS NEW INITIATIVES TO CAMPUS WATCH



*“Glasgow Airport continues to operate a zero-tolerance approach to disruptive behaviour at the airport. Thanks to our early intervention approach to challenging disruptive behaviour, we’ve seen a significant reduction in the number of incidents.”*

Glasgow Airport has launched its 2018 Campus Watch campaign on disruptive passengers with two new initiatives.

In an unprecedented move, the airport has launched a national advertising campaign to remind passengers that disruptive behaviour of any kind will not be tolerated. It has also invested in a new digital radio system to help disseminate live Campus Watch intelligence to staff across the airport.

Glasgow’s industry-leading disruptive passengers campaign was introduced in 2013 in partnership with Police Scotland. It provides training, advice and support to check-in staff, security teams, bar and restaurant employees, retailers and airline crew. A key aim is early intervention, with staff encouraged to report details of any potential incident to the airport’s central control room through a dedicated phone line. Information is then shared via a rapid

text alert system and, for the first time this year, digital radio.

Francois Bourienne, Chief Commercial Officer for Glasgow Airport’s parent group, AGS Airports Ltd, said: “Glasgow Airport continues to operate a zero-tolerance approach to disruptive behaviour at the airport. Thanks to our early intervention approach to challenging disruptive behaviour, we’ve seen a significant reduction in the number of incidents during the first five months of this year”.

Karen Dee, AOA Chief Executive, said: “Glasgow Airport’s Campus Watch initiative is a great example of our industry’s commitment to tackling the problem of disruptive passengers. Thankfully, incidents of disruptive behaviour are a very rare occurrence, with data from the Civil Aviation Authority showing that the number of incidents is stable despite record passenger growth”.

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## NEWCASTLE AIRPORT CONSULTS ON MASTERPLAN

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**Newcastle Airport** has launched a consultation on its new Masterplan, which sets out the airport's goals for its centenary year, 2035.

The airport says that Masterplan 2035 aims to deliver "improved connectivity and economic benefit, support an increase in inbound tourism and deliver

*"Passenger numbers, which reached 5.35 million in 2017, could grow to up to 9.4 million by 2035."*

an excellent customer experience". It says that passenger numbers, which reached 5.35 million in 2017, could grow to up to 9.4 million by 2035.

By 2035 the number of jobs supported across the North East of England could grow to 27,800 (from the current 18,900) and the airport's contribution

to Gross Value Added could rise to £2.3 billion (from the current £1.16 billion).

With a view to ensuring that the North East will be able to secure long haul air routes in the future, the plan provides for the safeguarding of the eastern end of the current runway to enable the construction of a 700-metre runway extension, should that prove necessary.

The consultation on the Masterplan will close on 13 September.

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## EDINBURGH OPENS SCOTLAND'S FIRST ROUTE TO CHINA

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**Hainan Airlines** launched the first ever direct flight between Scotland and China in June.

The first Airbus 330 flight between Edinburgh and Beijing Capital International Airport will operate four times a week and was welcomed by Edinburgh Airport's Chief

Executive, Gordon Dewar, as "a momentous day for Scotland and China". He described the new link as "a route which has immense opportunities for our countries, from tourism and business to culture and education". Edinburgh is second only to London as the top UK tourist destination for Chinese tourists.

Passenger numbers are continuing to grow at Edinburgh Airport, which recorded the busiest year ever for a Scottish airport in 2017, with 13.4 million passengers (up 8.6% on the previous year), adding 34 new routes during the year. The airport was recently named "Airport of the Year" at the Scottish Transport Awards.

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## RYANAIR TO OPEN NEW BASE AT SOUTHEND AIRPORT

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**Ryanair** has announced that it will open a new base at London Southend Airport from April 2019.

The airline will use three new aircraft – an investment of €257 million – to operate more than 55 weekly flights on 13 new routes to eight different countries, including Spain and Italy.

It expects to carry more than a million passengers a year, doubling the airport's annual passenger numbers.

Warwick Brady, CEO of Stobart Group, which manages the airport, said: "We have a clear and focussed strategy to grow our airport to welcome over 5 million passengers a year by 2022.

Passengers are increasingly turning to London Southend Airport amid the capacity crisis found elsewhere in the capital, where holidaymakers and business travellers face disruption from overcrowded airports, impacting on customer service". London Southend Airport has been ranked "best London airport" by Which? for the fifth time.

## UK AIRPORTS LOSING DIRECT CONNECTIVITY

The UK is the only country in the 28-member European Union whose airports lost connectivity over the past year.

The bad news for UK airports on the number of direct air services they offer came in the latest ACI Europe report on connectivity, published on 19 June.

London Heathrow fell to third place in the league table of European hub airports (with its direct connectivity down 0.2%) due to lack of capacity. Frankfurt (up 11.1%) is now the No. 1 airport in Europe, replacing Amsterdam-Schiphol, now in second place. London Gatwick (No.11 in Europe) saw a 2.6% decline in its direct connectivity.



The only bright spot among the UK's larger airports was London Stansted, whose 11.5% increase in direct connectivity placed it among Europe's top performers.

*“The UK is the only country in the 28-member European Union whose airports lost connectivity over the past year.”*

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## AIRPORTS SAFETY WEEK “A TREMENDOUS SUCCESS”



AOA Operations & Safety Director, Roger Koukkoullis, has declared **2018 UK Airports Safety Week**, held this year from 14 to 20 May at over 50 airports under the theme “Promoting Safety Together” a huge success.

He said: “The marvellous support, meticulous planning and excellent delivery has resulted in many remarkable events across the country. It has been a tremendous success”.

Koukkoullis highlighted several key components of this year’s campaign, the third Airports Safety Week, including positive collaborative energy, inclusivity encompassing the whole airport community, greater awareness of many issues and becoming a recognised source of learning for safety development.

He stressed both the wide range of participants and the variety of issues covered as important features of the week. Landside staff and representatives of local communities, including schools, local councils, emergency services and local transport operators had joined airside workers in local programmes. Equally airports had embraced not just the familiar airport safety subjects, but also occupational health, wellbeing, mental health awareness and environmental issues.

Examples of airport activities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland included Team Heathrow ambitious programme, with advice on how to report on incidents and near misses airside, a demonstration of the dangers of driving within the refuelling zone and nutrition and mental health engagement. Edinburgh Airport invited visitors to its air

traffic control tower, while terminal teams gave information on first aid, terminal evacuation procedures, fire marshals, safe walking routes and escalator and baggage trolley safety. Belfast City Airport engaged ground handlers, contractors and airlines.

Meanwhile, Cardiff Airport found the most imaginative way of portraying the involvement in the week of airside staff, police and fire services and passengers by dressing up children to represent them.

The 2018 Airports Safety Week drew on a project team of experts from ten UK airports, large and small, from across the country. There was also external support from the Civil Aviation Authority’s ground handling operations safety team and the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health, the 46,000-member Chartered body for UK health and safety professionals that is the world’s biggest professional health and safety membership organisation. The week of events at UK airports attracted visitors from airports in seven other countries.

Surveys of attendees at this year’s airport events and of participating airports will provide the AOA with feedback which will be used to further improve future campaigns.

## HEATHROW AIMS TO OPEN NEW RUNWAY IN 2026

Heathrow Airport hopes to begin building its third runway in 2021 and for it to be open for business by 2026.

The target dates were announced after MPs voted by 415 votes to 119 in support of Heathrow’s North West runway plan.

Heathrow’s Chief Executive, John Holland-Kaye, described the Parliamentary vote as

“a great day for the country”. He said: “We have been arguing about this for 50 years. It is now the will of Parliament. We are going to do this as quickly as possible”. He said that the £14 billion project would be entirely privately funded and that airport charges would remain “close to today’s levels”. He also promised residents a £700 million insulation pot for schools and homes and an extension of the existing night flight ban

from five to six and a half hours.

The airport will now launch a second consultation process and prepare an application to the Planning Inspectorate for development consent. It expects the approval process to take 18 months. The new runway would increase Heathrow’s capacity to 130 million passengers a year – 78 million passengers used the airport in 2017.





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