

Blackpool Airport

Newsletter 1
August-October 2016

BLACKPOOL FLYER



Welcome to the first newsletter from Blackpool Airport

by Jay Gates, Airport Manager

It is often said that one of the defining aspects of what makes a good company great, is how it is regarded within the local community, and with this in mind, despite our modest size, we want to let you know what is happening at your local airport. I hope that you enjoy what will become a quarterly newsletter.



Welcome to the first of a series of ongoing and regular newsletters that will connect you with your local airport and keep you informed, and educated, as to what is happening here and to give you that sense of local civic pride that comes with having an airport within your local community. It is important to know that Blackpool Airport is a valuable asset, not only for the Blackpool and Fylde local area, but for the North West Region as a whole. We are the only commercial public airport in Lancashire and have a long history that comes from being one of the oldest airports in the country.

Northwards from Manchester and Liverpool there is no other Licensed Airport facility which is open 7 days a week until you reach the English and Scottish border at Carlisle. To the East of us the nearest Licensed Airport facility is Leeds-Bradford Airport and to the west of us lies the Isle of Man, and for whom the Blackpool air-link to the mainland is a lifeline!! We therefore play an important role not only for local aviation requirements, but also for the local business aviation sector that require corporate executives to move around the country, as well as Europe, to conduct business vital to the development of the North West and to expand North West businesses into other regions.

Blackpool Airport also plays a crucial part in keeping the lights on throughout the year, and for keeping you warm during the long winter nights. This is because we are the home to the helicopters that support both the Morecambe Bay Gas fields and the Liverpool Bay Oil and Gas fields. These specialist helicopters support all of the operations so necessary to ensure that the offshore production platforms, storage facilities and maintenance vessels are kept running with operating crews, engineers, technicians, supplies and parts.

With each newsletter we intend not only to update you on local news and activities associated with Blackpool Airport, but over time we want to introduce you to the tenants and operators based at the airport who play that vital role in all the aviation needs that make Blackpool Airport such a wonderful asset to the people and communities of Blackpool, the Fylde, Lancashire and the North West of England.

The Energy College

Work progresses on the new build

Those of you familiar with the area may have noticed that Fylde and Blackpool College has commenced the building of a new Energy College on the old terminal site at the airport and it is planned for completion in June 2017. From January to March this year our old and obsolete terminal building was demolished and the Administration building moved lock stock and barrel to make way for the new purpose designed college.



The old terminal ready for demolition



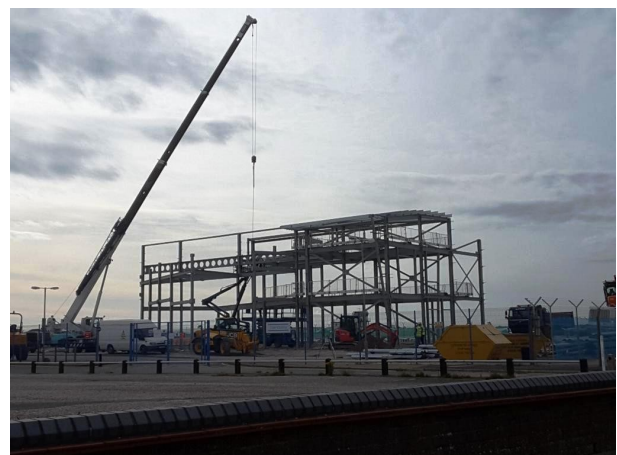
and gone!



The Administration Building was moved in 7 parts and reassembled to make way for the new college



July saw the completion of the building foundations and on Monday 25 July 2016 the first crane arrived and the installation of the first pieces of the steel framework were put up the next day. The steel framework phase of project was planned over a 9 week period and was completed by the end of September.



The Energy College

Work progresses on the new build

By early October the steelwork, roofing and concrete flooring had been completed and the internal walling work commenced ...



and at the end of October the drainage works were underway ...



...and the cladding of the building, roof insulation and final roofing covering are progressing well.



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Visitors

Find out who dropped by ...

On 7 and 8 August we were pleased to have some of the participants of the Blackpool Airshow stay with us, including an historic De Havilland Chipmunk, a Pitts Special aerobatic aircraft and the Breitling Wingwalkers..



... and also performing was the Blackpool Airport based Russian YAK-50 aerobatic aircraft (above) flown by local pilot J Hurrell of High G Advanced Flight Training.

Other welcome visitors to the airport have been the British Antarctic Survey DHC-6 Twin Otter en route to Calgary in Canada ...



... and Rebecca the Cessna 182, with her pilot, on her journey around the world to raise awareness of diabetes...

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Find out who dropped by ...

In the summer it was 'fantastique' to welcome 11 aircraft from a French Flying Club, Aeroclub Airbus Nantes, who stopped over for a few days and enjoyed everything that Blackpool could offer.



More recently we had Dutch visitors - Marinus, Anthony, Jan and Hans - who had a stop-over in Blackpool on their way back to Holland from a Malt Whisky tasting holiday to Oban in the Scottish Highlands.



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On the Airport

A year of Citywing at Blackpool Airport ...

In April Citywing celebrated a year of flying from Blackpool. David Buck, CEO of Citywing commented that "it is very much a case of business as usual for us. We are back to levels of passengers we had before the closure. In June we had almost 2,000 people flying from Blackpool".

Passengers travel from Blackpool with Citywing to the Isle of Man and then, if they wish, on to Belfast.



Nothing can be easier for the Citywing passengers with passenger parking just outside Check-in and Arrivals, a warm welcome from the Citywing staff and a short walk through security - then it is out to the aircraft and on their way.



Citywing offer 2 flights per day and due to demand extra flights were introduced on a Friday evening and another on a Sunday afternoon throughout the summer. So if you are looking for a different day out or a weekend away – why not pop over to the Isle of Man? You can go there and back in the day from Blackpool Airport for a short Manx adventure or stay longer to enjoy this lovely historical island.



Book through the Citywing website - www.citywing.com or call reservations on +44 (0) 871 200 0440

Airport Operations

Air Traffic Control

Our Air Traffic Control Team are a highly skilled group of people who manage the flow of aircraft into and out of Blackpool Airport airspace.

The team consists of a Senior Air Traffic Control Officer (SATCO), his deputy (DSATCO), 4 Air traffic Control Officers (ATCO) and they currently have one trainee ATCO under instruction.

All Air Traffic Controllers work within the strict guidelines produced and monitored by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

To assist them there are 3 Operational Support Staff (OSS) who also are required to undergo rigorous training so that they can ensure the Controllers are able to concentrate on the aircraft and have all the required information to hand.

Controllers guide pilots during take-off and landing, keep pilots informed about changes in weather conditions at the airport and provide information to aircraft as they travel through the skies around Blackpool Airport. They are assisted by Operational Support Staff who update weather and aeronautical information, provide office support, and handle radio communications to vehicles operating on the aerodrome. They also book flights in and out of the airport, preparing the necessary flight strips and information for the controllers – so if you ever call the tower it is more than likely you will speak to the OSS.

The team also manage the Safeguarding of the Airport - this involves consideration of all applications for planning permission and use of cranes around the airport to make sure nothing interferes with operations and navigational aids.

At Blackpool Airport the day starts at 06:15 when the first controller comes on duty and the first weather observation of the day is completed. They then carry out checks to make sure the equipment is all functioning properly in time for the airfield to open at 07:00 and the tower remains open until 21:00 (9pm).

They deal with a variety of aircraft including Babcock's red helicopters travelling to and from the offshore gas rigs, Citywing daily flights to and from the Isle of Man, North West Air Ambulance's yellow helicopters, general aviation aircraft based at the airport, aircraft visiting the airport or overflying the local area, private jets and military aircraft – not to mention the ground vehicles! Rarely a quiet moment!

So next time you take to the skies or look at aircraft flying over you, remember the teams, that work in the Air Traffic Control Tower at Blackpool Airport who are dedicated to keeping the skies safe for both the pilots and passengers in the air and all of us on the ground.



Take Care

Lasers and Lanterns

As the dark nights draw in several seemingly fun activities present a potential fatal risk to pilots. Each year the Airport has noticed an increase in numbers of reports made by pilots of laser attacks as they fly over the local area - especially during the Blackpool Lights.

This is when laser pens are used to point at aircraft and into their cockpits. This not only distracts pilots, but the more powerful lasers can cause damage to the pilot's eyes and even blindness.



All laser attacks on aircraft are against the law and are reported to the police. In the last year alone 4 people in the UK have been jailed for up to 6 months after being found guilty of this offence. This matter is taken very seriously, not just in the UK but worldwide, and in the USA a man was recently jailed for 14 years for the same offence.

Bonfire Night, along with other special occasions, produce another activity that is becoming increasingly popular. This is the release of Chinese and other paper lanterns.

In 2014 the risk prompted government guidance to be issued stating that local air traffic control should be notified if lanterns are to be set free within 10 miles of an airfield as they could be sucked into, and cause damage to, an aircraft engine and potentially result in a fatal accident. They also pose a significant threat to both domestic animals and wildlife.



TAKE CARE

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter