the inner circle

Inside information for business travellers

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Issue 4

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Bristol Airport, Bristol BS48 3DY
www.bristolairport.co.uk

New German routes fill 'gap in the map'

For several years German destinations have featured strongly in 'most wanted routes' surveys carried out by Bristol Airport, particularly when considering responses from the business community. Until recently, a glance at the Airport's route map of over 100 destinations has been enough to explain why – only one was in Germany (easyJet's daily service to the capital, Berlin).

Following the withdrawal of British Airways from the regions over half a decade ago, German destinations have been underserved from the South West and South Wales. Lufthansa launched a three-times daily service to Frankfurt in 2008 but unfortunately the economic downturn saw the withdrawal of this service after only 12 months despite encouraging passenger numbers. Since then, the Airport's route development team has worked hard to demonstrate the strong business demand for a direct service to one or more of Germany's major cities and, in late 2012, this effort paid off when bmi regional announced new flights to Hamburg and Frankfurt, swiftly followed by further services to Hannover and Munich.

Following the launch of double-daily service to Aberdeen last October, the airline commenced five services a week to Hamburg in February, increasing to 12 per week from April. In addition, a six times weekly Franfkurt flight begins in late April. Flights to Munich and Hannover begin in May, and will also operate six days a week, as well as a similar service to Milan Malpensa.

All four cities are interesting destinations for leisure visitors, but the big win is for businesses across the South West and Wales who now have a direct link to some of Germany's industrial powerhouses. Major employers such as Airbus, Garrad Hassan and Imperial Tobacco have strong links with Hamburg, while the region's financial services sector will benefit from convenient access to Frankfurt, one of Europe's leading commercial centres. In addition, the Hannover flight will be well used by Forces families visiting relatives based in the nearby region of North Rhine-Westphalia.

See inside for a profile of Bristol Airport's newest airline partner, bmi regional.

Bristol Airport
Amazing journeys start here

Blue Islands doubles up

Channel Islands airline, Blue Islands, has more than doubled capacity on its twice-daily Bristol-Jersey service as a result of strong passenger demand. A 48 seat ATR-42 aircraft replaces the 19 seat Jetstream on the popular route.

Since starting the service in April 2011. Blue Islands grown its share of the market driven by a convenient schedule which makes a day's business in Jersey or Bristol possible. The service is also well-used by leisure passengers travelling in both directions. In fact, during the summer, 70 per cent of seats are taken by leisure visitors to the largest of the Channel Islands.

Operating since 2006, Blue Islands offers a unique pricing policy, with no charges to pay with debit or credit cards, no charges for baggage, and no charges when making changes to a ticket (subject to fare availability).

New lounge nears completion

In the last issue of *Inner Circle* we offered you a sneak preview of the new business lounge set to open this spring. Work continues on the £600,000 project, which will see the lounge relocated, rebranded and increased in size by 50 per cent.

The Aspire Lounge will offer an improved product for business passengers with greater levels of comfort in a stylishly designed environment. The new location includes kitchen facilities, meaning that the complimentary menu will include hot food as well as snacks and premium brand drinks.

A series of distinct zones will cater for the differing requirements of passengers, depending on whether they want to work or relax before boarding. Specially designed side tables provide charging facilities for laptops, iPads and other mobile devices, and the lounge will have its own toilet facilities.

The Aspire Lounge opens in mid-April but, in the meantime, here's what to expect from this top-notch new facility.

New coach service provides direct link from South Wales

Coach company, Greyhound UK, has launched a new service between Swansea and Bristol Airport. As well as providing the first direct link between the Airport and the West Wales city, the luxury coach service also calls at Cardiff, Newport and the University of the West of England.

The new route is served by up to an hourly Greyhound UK service between Swansea and Bristol Airport during the week (and up to two hourly service on weekends). End to end journey time from Swansea Bus Station to Bristol Airport is two hours and 45 minutes. Coaches will drop off on the terminal forecourt, just metres away from the check-in hall, making it much easier to get to Bristol Airport from South Wales without having to worry about changing between different modes of transport.

Register now for the chance to win a year's free access to the new Business Lounge

We hope you enjoy this issue of *Inner Circle*, Bristol Airport's newsletter providing inside information for business passengers. You can also receive *Inner Circle* in digital format. To register for our e-newsletter, please email innercircle@bristolairport.com. All registrations received by the end of May 2013 will be entered into a prize draw to win a year's free and unlimited access to the new Aspire Lounge which is set to open this spring (see above for more details).

AIR FRANCE KLM wins 'best short haul' airline award

The AIR FRANCE KLM Group has won the accolade of Best Short-Haul Airline at the 2013 Business Travel Awards, beating off competition from British Airways and Lufthansa, amongst others.

The award was based on a number of criteria demonstrating the Group's commitment to the business community and the support it offers corporate travel buyers. This latest accolade follows victory in the Business Airlines of the Year category in 2012.

Junction 21 Enterprise Area set for take-off

Work has begun on an employment development just a few miles from Bristol Airport which will bring thousands of new jobs to Weston-super-Mare, after land close to Junction 21 (M5) was designated an Enterprise Area by the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

Business in north somerset
www.innorthsomerset.co.uk

Junction 21 Enterprise Area (J21EA) is one of five Enterprise Areas and an Enterprise Zone in the Bristol/Bath City Region. Enterprise Area status recognises the excellent potential these sites have for business growth and Bristol Airport is working closely with the Economic Development Service at North Somerset Council to link the Airport's ever expanding range of business services to the employment opportunities coming forward at J21EA.

J21EA is made up of a number of sites which have permission for significant new commercial developments as well as two new communities. They offer significant opportunities to businesses and investors including:

- employment land with either outline or full planning permission and site access already in place, making them 'ready to go;'
- a simplified planning regime, including support through the Local Economic Development Protocol and other measures, used to supplement more flexible planning permissions;
- excellent transport links, including the close proximity to the M5, mainline rail, Bristol Airport and Portbury Docks;
- a highly skilled workforce, with 47 % of Weston residents working in management, associate professional and technical occupation; and
- support including marketing and infrastructure investment in partnership with the LEP and the City Deal programme.

For further details of progress and opportunities at J21EA, call the Economic Development Service on 01934 426 266, email business@n-somerset.gov.uk or visit www.innorthsomerset.co.uk/j21-enterprise-area

Meet Bristol Airport's newest airline – bmi regional

Who owns bmi regional?

On 1 June 2012, Sector Aviation Holdings acquired bmi regional from IAG, securing the future of the brand and business. bmi regional now operates as an independent entity.

Who are the team running the airline?

Chairman Ian Woodley and director Graeme Ross know the business inside out having founded Business Air, which was sold to British Midland in 1996. They have built a strong management team which is headed by chief executive Cathal O'Connell. Sector Aviation Holdings is funded by Stephen and Peter Bond, who have extensive aviation investment experience as the founders of Bond Offshore Helicopters.

What is its market?

As the name suggests, bmi regional serves niche markets on domestic UK and European routes which are ideally suited to small jet operations. The airline operates over 350 flights a week

What is bmi regional's claim to fame?

The airline has achieved the accolade of 'UK's most punctual airline' for seven years running. It also provides a 30 minute check-in service, free onboard food/drink and a 20kg hold baggage allowance.

How many aircraft are in the bmi regional fleet?

14 Embraer 145 aircraft with 49 seats and four Embraer 135 aircraft with 37 seats.

What routes are operated from Bristol?

Scheduled services to Aberdeen, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Hannover, Milan and Munich.

Short Sectors

Automatic for the people

Flybe has introduced an automatic check-in option at the point of booking online so that between 36 and 15 hours prior to departure an electronic boarding pass will automatically be sent direct to a smart phone or email address.

Royal reward for KLM

KLM – or KLM Royal Dutch Airways to give its full title - has been granted permission to continue using the predicate 'Royal' for the next 25 years. Established in 1919 as the Royal Airline Company for the Netherlands and Colonies, KLM has longstanding royal connections. The latest extension follows careful consideration by the Mayor of Amstelveen, the Queen's Commissioner for North Holland, and the Queen's cabinet.

Speaking in code

A new flight code came into existence recently when bmi regional adopted the BM prefix for its flights – with the new letters closer to the airline's name than the previous BD code, a legacy of its British Midland roots. The numerical element of flight codes remains the same.

Flying Blue benefit for Elite members

Flying Blue Elite members can start the new year with a positive Level Miles balance as it is now possible to carry over Level Miles earned last year into 2013 and beyond. As long as Elite status is maintained, every Level Mile earned above the required threshold will be saved for the following year.

African specialist ups frequencies

Already billed as 'the Africa specialist', Brussels Airlines is expanding its African flight offer in 2013, with frequency increases to several destinations from the Belgian capital. Dakar will be offered daily instead of four times a week during the summer season, while Freetown, Cotonou and Conkary will also see increased flights.

easyJet secures Scottish public sector deal

easyJet has announced a new travel deal which will enable Scottish public sector staff to travel with the airline. The deal promises to provide affordable travel for public sector works travelling on business, and comes as a result of a partnership between easyJet and the Scottish Government's travel management company, Expotel.

Culinary creations from Charles de Gaulle

Renowned chef, Michel Roth, is offering a new dining experience in the business cabin on Air France's long haul flights from Paris Charles de Gaulle. The culinary star from L'Espadon at the Ritz Paris has created six exceptional dishes inspired by French classics.

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New Route Pass for regular travellers

A new route pass offering 25 per cent discount for travellers booking four return flights has been launched by Eastern Airways across its network, including Bristol Airport.

The new 4-4-3 Route Pass product will benefit regular customers, enabling them to purchase four flights for the price of three on any Eastern route. Fares are fully flexible and there are no change fees. Eastern Airways also offers a Zonal Route Pass providing six flights for the price of four.

The 4-4-3 Route Pass is bookable through travel agents and via Eastern Airways reservations on 08703 669100.

Bristol Flying Centre focuses on corporate customers

The vast majority of passengers using Bristol Airport pass through the main terminal, but there is another side to the Airport – one that they rarely see, save from a brief glance from the window of an aircraft as it speeds down the runway. The Bristol Flying Centre (BFC) is Bristol Airport's resident 'fixed base operator' and provides a range of general aviation services, from engineering and handling to award winning private jet charter and aircraft management as Centreline Air Charter

Located to the south of the runway, adjacent to the Silver Zone car park, BFC operates from modern, purpose-built facilities with an experienced management team at the helm. BFC's facilities include two private passenger lounges with complimentary refreshments, showers, meeting rooms and wifi access.

The BFC team will also help passengers on private charters navigate the strict customs and immigration clearances required in advance, ensuring the correct documentation is provided in order to ensure a smooth entry to the UK for visitors. For the aircraft, BFC offers hard parking, hangar space and ground power supply as required. Systems replenishment, toilet servicing and de-icing are also available, as well as BFC's own dedicated fuel bowsers and cavernous hangar.

But this already successful general aviation operation recently experienced a step change that could see it becoming the centre for vital charter services linking global companies based in the South West with other sites across the UK and Europe. BFC is now handling bmi regional's corporate shuttle service for Airbus, which sees Embraer 145s operating daily between Bristol, Toulouse and Chester alongside similar flights serving other organisations.

Coupled with its support for aircraft owned and operated by several high profile business leaders, BFC is developing its specialist service for corporate customers which complements Bristol Airport's focus on business passengers. Together with improvements to the main terminal's business lounge and other facilities, Bristol Airport can increasingly offer services to meet the needs of businesses across the South West and Wales.

More seats, global links

Bristol Airport's link with a major European hub will be strengthened this summer when Dutch airline, KLM, introduces additional capacity on its four-times daily service between Bristol and Amsterdam Schiphol.

KLM will increase capacity by over 12 per cent from the start of the summer schedule by introducing a new Embraer 190 aircraft on two of the four daily flights between Bristol and Amsterdam.

The introduction of additional capacity on the Bristol-Amsterdam route follows the launch of a fourth daily flight in spring 2011, increasing flexibility for passengers and making more onward connections accessible from Schiphol.

The Embraer 190 aircraft offers increased capacity thanks to its stretched fuselage fitted with a new engine and wing design. This means that it is not just a stretch version with better performance, but a totally optimized aircraft. It is also more fuel efficient while offering much higher performance in terms of range, speed and comfort. Also it has an efficient passenger configuration with two seats on each side of the aisle meaning all passengers have access to a window or aisle seat.

Henri Hourcade, General Manager AIR FRANCE KLM UK and Ireland said:

"We are delighted to introduce this new aircraft on such an important route on our regional network and are confident it will be warmly welcomed by our passengers. We are always happy to improve our products especially from Bristol Airport where we have been operating for over 20 years."

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