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COMMERCIAL AVIATION has a long tradition in both the Basle Area and the UK. Swiss and Britons enjoy a special affinity whenever areas such as charter and scheduled services, simulator training, aircraft maintenance, interior completion works and launching new airlines are making headways.

Balair, Globe Air, Jet Aviation Basle and Crossair pioneering European regional airtraffic were beneficiaries of Irish and British expertise in aviation when starting their operations at Basel-Mulhouse airport. There are still mechanics and engineers involved at Jet Aviation and SWISS who help to manage their avionics, airframe and engine shops.

Scheduled traffic goes as far back as 16 August 1923 when Handley Page Airways opened regular services between London Croydon and Basle Sternenfeld with 38 passengers on board. Another debut making local aviation history was the arrival of Imperial Airways on the same route on 14 May 1932. As everywhere in Europe, World War 2 brought an end to commercial flights. In 1952 British European Airways (BEA) was first in reclaiming traffic rights between both cities thus introducing a flight from North London to Basle and onward to Zurich with 5th freedom rights to carry passengers between Basle and Zurich. As time progressed all BEA flights were switched to the newly built Heathrow airport as London's main gateway. As it was the case at many occasions the carrier always introduced the latest aircraft generation on the Basle route. A Vickers Viking took off at Basle-Mulhouse airport carrying 38 hand-picked passengers to London on its maiden flight. As passenger numbers improved BEA began to introduce larger aircraft such as Vickers Viscount and Vanguard seating between 60 and 100 passengers. Both models marked the latest progress of British aircraft engineering in the field of turboprop-powered planes only rivaled by Lockheed's L188 Electra also built as a four-engined aircraft.

The jet age at Basle-Mulhouse also started with British European Airways when it started to deploy De Havilland Comet 4 and Hawker Sidley Trident 1, 2 and 3 once a day in the mid-sixties. British commercial aviation faced structural changes when BEA as short-to-medium range carrier merged with BOAC (British Overseas Airways Corporation) then operating as long-haul airline to become British Airways as predominately state-run airline. BA continued the policy of BEA by deploying new B737 Advanced, B757 and Airbus aircraft. After 1992 the carrier switched to two flights a day after Swissair's decision to pull out of the TriRhena market. Former Crossair took up the competition against British Airways flying three daily services to London-Heathrow. In October 1999, BA and Crossair agreed to code-share thus ending head-on competition with aircraft exceeding 150 seats. On 31 October the return of BA with its own brand of aircraft will open a new chapter of Basle-England relations.

The story of commercial aviation originating at British ports bound for Basle would be far from complete if there is no chapter describing English charter activities after 1952: It marked the year when air traffic began to pick up substantially at Basle-Mulhouse for some time. British charter airlines and tour operators chose this airport as their gateway for holiday packages including destinations in Austria, Italy and Croatia. Many carriers lasted just one summer, others enjoyed longer leases of life. So, it was always interesting to see which one was emerging from the dead of winter at the beginning of each season. A number of aircraft (see picture gallery) from airlines such as Air Ferry, British Eagle, British Midland, British United, Britannia Airways, Court Line, Invicta and Monarch crowded the apron mostly on weekends at day and night. At the height of this traffic 310,000 passengers boarded the planes at Basle-Mulhouse at one year. The first to take advantage of regular charter series were English pupils on school holidays. Next were factory workers taking to the skies with their overtime pay checks and followed by retirees closer to the end of this traffic cycle.

Special moments for the airport came with the introduction of car ferries by air from coastal airports such as Lydd and Southend near the Channel waterway pioneered by Channel Air Bridge with ATL98 Carvair in the early sixties. The company was merged and gave rise to British United Air Ferries and British Air Ferries in the early and late 1970's. The aircraft servicing the Basle routes was a converted DC4/C54 which received strengthened cargo floors, extended fuselages and tail unit, enlarged doors to allow nose-in car loading and cockpit set-ups which were placed well above the normal flight deck of original DC4/C54s. The traffic had a touch of exclusivity as rich Britons went abroad with their Bentleys, Jaguars and Rolls Royce.

à Basle-UK relations turn 70

à Who is booking EasyJet ?

à Private Jet business changes its profile

à Route News

à UK aircraft gallery



(Paul Dopson/Airliners.net)

WHO IS BOOKING EASYJET ? – As the carrier is rapidly approaching the 200,000 passenger ceiling, it seems quite natural to seek better knowledge of the profile most typical to the cost-minded passenger.

A recently held seminar at EuroAirport produced some conclusions which help to characterize his/her market behavior.

“The cost-minded traveler is on private or leisure travel. He/she will spend about 250€ at final destination. Visits are short, possibly more frequent if the destination can offer attractive sites and events. He/she are eager to visit new places. Visiting friends and relatives is a popular option. Sports events such as World Tennis or seasonal sports such as skiing in the Alps are ranking high in the traveler’s agenda if low(er) fares can be booked”.

The EAP is presently registering about 1,000 passengers a day. Average volumes may rise to 1,500 passengers a day after 1 November when two city-pairs to and from London-Luton have been introduced.

EasyJet’s INCOMING traffic is now at 48% while local passenger are matching 42 %. 10% can be attributed to business travel.

Passengers are taking advantage of EasyJet flights within an 80 Km radius both incoming and outgoing.

Traffic shares held by scheduled carriers (9 months)

Year	2004		2003
Air France	472,297	25%	25%
SWISS	472,887	25%	33%
Lufthansa	146,310	8%	7%
EasyJet	145,767	8%	----
Hapag Lloyd	141,969	7%	7%

ROUTE NEWS for 2004/2005

A weekly La Romana charter starting on 22 December will also include tour packages to PuntaCana marketed by TUI Stuttgart.

Aigle Azur offers two flights to Constantine on days 1 and 5

Air France increased seats per aircraft to Lyon and Rennes now with ATR42 (Lyon) and ERJ135 (Rennes). Bordeaux is new on Air France’s daily schedule

Aria introduced a morning and evening service to Toulouse on days 1 to 5

British Airways returned with its own aircraft (A320)

Club Airways put off flights to Geneva as it faces difficulties with its business (membership) model.

EasyJet added two additional flights to London-Luton, now with daily departures to Berlin, Liverpool, Luton and Stansted

Hapag Lloyd entered a codeshare with Air Berlin in order to further optimize fleet utilization ex EuroAirport

JAT Airways will start serving Belgrade with B737-400 on 10 December, days 5/7

SWISS offers 18 flights to London-City each week after selling eight slots at London-Heathrow to BA.

Turkish THY offers three weekly departures with B737-400 to Istanbul on day 3, 5 and 6

What is at stake when choosing PRIVATE JETS for BUSINESS and LEASURE TRAVEL ?

A study of Setter&Meier advertising agencies has taken polling data of the seventies as reference materials seeking information about how decisions are made concerning corporate or private travels.

There is no surprise that criteria have changed since 1970 and particularly after 11 September 2001. Security has become the number one concern among heads of corporations and rich individuals. Meanwhile the list of criteria for choosing private jets for business purposes has grown from 8 to 19 possible priorities and considerations.

Year 1970	Importance in %	Year 2004	Importance in %
°reduction of travel time	85	°maximum security	83
°itinerary planning	85	°business travel	82
°customer-relations	81	°teaming up with management	76
°plane as office/meeting space	77	°visits to customers	76
°customer incentives	75	°plane as office/meeting space	73
°increased productivity	72	°increased productivity	66
°personal security	62	°customer service	65
°aircraft safety	24	°expanding market shares	65
		°emergency services for clients	64
		°special projects	61
		°sales and marketing blitzes	61
		°leisure travel	58
		°customer incentives	57
		°staff incentives	54
		°time-sensitive freight/mail	50
		°goodwill action	44
		°connecting other flights	28
		°humanitarian support/repatriation	27

The global work place has clearly shifted the focus on both sides of the aisle. The enlarged list of priorities speaking in favour of corporate jet-travel reflects a different pattern how business is done around the globe. Today’s environment requires a higher alert to customer satisfaction and market presence. That is why the list of criteria is so much service-oriented and driven by calls on short notice. Also, business sectors in need of flexible travel solutions have expanded in numbers beyond the service industry.