

Your Weekly Business Bulletin from Thanet & East Kent Chamber

Thanet & East Kent Insider

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1. Manston, KIA and Flybe

Delegates to the Chamber's business breakfast last Thursday in Manston in the departure lounge of Kent International Airport heard a detailed report on the new daily flights linking Manston to Edinburgh which will begin exactly one week later on 27th May 2010. Delegates learned that passengers will fly in a Bombardier Dash 8-400 aircraft. No-one in the East Kent coastal business community is in any doubt that the expansion of the airport will provide significant growth opportunities for local companies. Research by this Chamber suggests that the main worry for residents and some companies is the noise generated by aircraft flying over East Thanet. The authoritative work, "OMEGA Community Noise Study" of January 2009 by Southampton and Manchester Metropolitan Universities put this simply as, "Noise disturbance is often the most significant issue raised by local communities concerned about airport expansion and also accounts for the vast majority of complaints about airport operations." All of which explains one of the reasons why Flybe chose the Bombardier Dash 8-400 aircraft to service the route. It is known in the industry as the Q400 and the Q stands for quiet.

2. Surely More Aircraft, More Noise?

Not necessarily. In fact, the Glasgow Airport Noise Action Plan 2008–2013 of December 2008 quotes the results of a Civil Aviation Authority report: "It found that Glasgow Airport's noise footprint shrank in 2006 compared to 2002, despite a rise in passenger numbers from 7.8 to 8.8 million. It also found that the noise footprint in 2006 was less than half the size it was in 1990. Thus while Glasgow Airport continues to grow, the airport operation is actually getting quieter for its neighbours and stakeholders." In other words, modern aircraft are relatively quiet. This is certainly the case with Bombardier Dash 8-400 aircraft which will operate on the Manston - Edinburgh route. It has been chosen specifically by Flybe for its low noise in operation. Benefiting from an A rating for noise and fuel consumption by journey length, Flybe is understandably confident of justifying its claims for minimal environmental impact.

3. What About All The Extra Charges for a Tea or Coffee?

Economy passengers do have to pay for drinks but are allowed to carry 20kg of luggage in the hold as well as one piece of hand luggage weighing a maximum of 10kg. Economy ticket prices start from £24.99, which is less than the price of a bottle of good single malt whisky. Flybe pre-assigns you a seat before you board the aircraft. You can pre-book your seat online, allowing you to choose exactly where you want to sit on board and with whom. Leg room is reportedly "more than any other UK low cost airline." Business passengers might elect to pay a supplement for a 'Flybe Economy Plus' ticket which allows for priority check-in, no cost flight changes, 40 kg of hold baggage, access to Flybe executive lounges, drinks and snacks on board and double reward points from "the UK's most generous frequent flyer programme". Rather like the Paris Metro, Flybe offers a Business Express ticket book for frequent flyers who can buy a book of 20 one-way Flybe economy plus tickets at a large discount on the published fare. With a market position between the European low cost airlines and national carriers such as British Airways, Flybe has certainly found a market among UK companies anxious to keep in face-to-face contact with key clients without spending time and money on long motorway journeys. The recent Business Travel Awards saw Flybe win the categories of 2010 Best Short-Haul Airline and 2010 Best Environmental Contribution.

4. Tech Spec

Anyone who has never had SAE 20W-50 on their hands, does not recognise the thump thump of a Merlin engine or who thinks the only Wright brothers worthy of mention played for Arsenal, might like to skip this item. The Bombardier Dash 8-400 aircraft, known by its abbreviation of Q400, has 2 Pratt & Whitney PWCI5DA Turboprop engines, suggesting strong resistance to volcanic ash clouds and the like. The two

six-bladed Dowty R408 propellers are similar to the R391s fitted to the Lockheed Martin C-130J Hercules, which incidentally has the longest continuous production run of any military aircraft in history. Locals may recall that it was a Lockheed Martin C130 which was the transport of choice to take a Sumatran Woolly Rhino from Indonesia to Port Lympne Wild Life Park. The Q400 carries two pilots and 2 flight attendants to service its 78 passengers. The maximum cruise altitude is listed by Flybe as 25,000 ft, although Bombardier claims a 27,000 ft ceiling, which is not quite high enough to pass over Mt Everest at 29,035 ft but more than enough to clear Ben Nevis, 4,409 ft. The manufacturers market the aircraft in Europe with the unique selling point that with 78 seats offering 30 inches of leg room, a low cost carrier operator requires a Passenger Load Factor of just 56% leading to “ Q400 turboProfits”. This is good news for local business owners who are looking to establish new clients and suppliers in the Edinburgh area and require a sustainable service to meet their travel needs.

5. KIA

To an increasing number of residents and businesses the brand name KIA is becoming associated not with the second largest South Korean automobile manufacturer, but with an enterprising airport in East Kent. There are regrettably still some who associate Kent International Airport with its previous owners rather than the solid company that is Infratil. It is because of the success of its core businesses that Infratil can take a long-term view of its investments in European Airports. Last week's edition of the Thanet & East Kent Insider took issue with the Daily Telegraph for printing an article stating that “ Kent International Airport at Manston, outside Ramsgate, which lurches from crisis to crisis” when this is clearly not the case. The Infratil company report for the year ending 31 March 2010 claims an understated “Satisfactory year for shareholders”. The Chairman, David Marko, and the Chief Executive, Marko Bogoevski, must be popular with their investors as “Ordinary shares delivered a 22.5% return (dividends and capital gains) over the year.” A 16% rise in operational earnings would be welcome news in most boardrooms in Europe. They conclude their report with the words, “While the worst of the financial crises is likely to be in the past, and the economic recovery appears to be underway, Infratil will remain careful and conservative.” Not many signs of a crisis there.

6. Locate in Kent

The offices of Locate in Kent have moved. Readers will be relieved to know that the new home is still located in Kent, a short distance from the former premises. Contact details are; Locate in Kent Ltd, 35 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4AX, United Kingdom. Tel: + 44 (0)1732 520700 Fax: + 44 (0)1732 520701, email: enquiries@LocateinKent.com.

7. Thanet Business Exhibition

The Thanet & East Kent Chamber Business Exhibition at G Casino on Friday 11 June 2010 has nearly attracted a full complement of exhibitors. If you would like to reserve one of the few remaining places, telephone the Chamber Marketing & Membership Officer, Graham Rayner, for full details, tel: 07899 873535 or email manager@tekc.co.uk.

8. Lavender Blue Helps You

“Increase traffic and potential customers by as much as ten times”, that is the estimate of the effect of including short videos on your trading website according to Neal Ashford of Chamber member, Lavender Blue Media. Neal and his team of experts take into account that the internet and social media have transformed the way businesses communicate with consumers. Many traditional advertising tactics do not work on-line where a new generation of buyers requires animated images to retain their interest and a lively presentation to activate their credit card account. Lavender Blue Media can create for you an online video marketing strategy which could start you on a much more profitable relationship with your buyers and those who influence them. A rich media content should strengthen your brand awareness, increase sales and give consumers an enhanced online experience For more information, give the Neal or Claire a call, tel: 01795 424252.

9. Apprenticeships

One aspect of skills training that received all-party support in the weeks leading up to the recent general election was the need to increase the number of apprenticeships offered to young people. Kent County Council in liaison with Thanet Works and Thanet District Council has 30 places available on a funded scheme which costs the employer just £50 per week. The apprentices are paid £105 per week and receive free training. Kent County Council takes on the responsibility on being the employer. The scheme runs for one year. For details, Chamber members should email manager@tekc.co.uk with the subject line "Apprenticeships".

10. News From The North

The Thanet & East Kent Chamber is the largest business support agency in the area with an increasing number of new members keen to take advantage of the growing opportunities for business-to-business sales. Although the Chamber is mainly focused on local issues, our membership now includes a growing number of companies from outside the East Kent coastal business community. One member from north of the Watford Gap escapes criticism for the following account. We have our doubts about this story, but readers must judge for themselves. A certain well-known businessman, Mr McTavish, sadly passed away a few years ago leaving a widow with a comfortable legacy following his prudent spending habits inherited from generations of thrifty McTavishes. Not wishing to squander her inheritance unnecessarily on writing to every family member and business contact, the widow McTavish went to the office of her local paper and said that she would like to place an entry in the Births, Deaths and Marriages column. The dutiful receptionist asked what words she wished to put and she replied, "Alec McTavish dead, funeral Thursday." The kindly receptionist said, "The normal form of words is to add something along the lines of 'sadly missed by family and friends' and perhaps to add a few lines of poetry familiar to the deceased. Mrs McTavish asked sharply, "How much does that cost?" The receptionist said that there is a minimum charge of £15.00 to cover the first ten words with each additional word costing £1.50 each. After some careful reflexion, the widow McTavish accepted the form proffered and returned it with the minimum ten words duly completed. Accordingly, the next edition of the local paper featured an entry in the Births, Deaths and Marriages column which read, "Alec McTavish dead, funeral Thursday. Volvo for sale, recently serviced."

11. Our Sponsors

Girlings Solicitors has been managing the managing the legal affairs of commercial and private clients for over a century. Twenty-six partners and one hundred and twenty members of staff ensure a comprehensive range of services from the local offices in Ashford, Canterbury, Folkestone, Herne Bay and Margate. Offices in France and Spain complement specialist departments for charities, individuals and companies. For details, telephone 01843 220274. Express By Holiday Inn took on the daunting task of restoring the former Prospect Inn at Minster. The result is a spectacular hotel that combines the best of Oliver Hill's 1930s design with ultra modern facilities and technological support. Conveniently located for business guests and holiday makers in East Kent, the meeting rooms and 105 bedrooms are available at competitive prices throughout the year. For details, telephone 01843 820250. Adecco is the world's largest HR solutions company offering a comprehensive service of temporary and contract staffing, permanent recruitment, outsourcing, outplacement, career services, training and consulting. Officially designated as a 2009 British Superbrand, Adecco is represented in Thanet and Dover by its Broadstairs office, tel: 01843 609292. CARISS design, install and support education and business computing systems as East Kent's leading specialist company in Open Source Software. To lower your carbon footprint, reduce your power consumption and adopt a thin client system, call CARISS, tel: 01843 823724. Mach Associates are the high-fliers in providing Internet technologies and specialist software solutions with a particular expertise in servicing the travel industry. A Microsoft Gold Certified Partner and with ISO9001 accreditation, Mach Associates also offers reduces telecom operating cost through VOIP/PBX phone systems. tel: 0870 321 9986. Sota Connect offers a comprehensive IT service covering best-value voice, data and Internet services for companies of all sizes as well as public sector organisations. The company operates two state-of-the-art data centres of over 10,000sq ft. Sota Connect owns and operates a unique 200km fibre network from London to Ramsgate with high bandwidth Internet access giving superfast Internet connections, tel: 0800 072 2420.



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It's happening now, it's happening in Thanet & East Kent.
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