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Ground power: Sector report

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NORTH AMERICAN HANDLING: Heavy going for some?

APRIL 2015

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APRIL 2015 GROUND HANDLING INTERNATIONAL

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Passenger numbers: on the rise again, says ACI EUROPE

The European airport trade body, ACI EUROPE, recently released its traffic report for December and the last full year. The report is the only air transport report which includes all types of civil aviation passenger flights, namely full service, low cost and charter. The report reveals that during 2014, passenger traffic at Europe's airports grew by an average of 5.4%.

More specifically, passenger traffic in the EU grew by a useful 4.9%; interesting to note, Greece, Luxembourg, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, Belgium and Ireland all significantly outperformed the EU average. Conversely, countries such as Poland, France, Germany, Austria, Latvia and the Czech Republic all saw airport traffic growing below this average. Meanwhile, non-EU airports posted a dynamic passenger traffic growth of 7.3% with Serbia, Iceland, FYROM, Georgia and Turkey all growing well above this average.

Allied to this, freight traffic across the European airport network grew by 3.6%, with a similar performance recorded between EU and non-EU airports (percentages here were 3.6% and 3.3% respectively). Aircraft movements were up by 2.6%, reflecting additional airline capacity in the market. However, the bulk of this additional capacity was deployed at non-EU airports, as these saw aircraft movements increase by 5.6% compared to just 1.5% at EU airports.

New joint venture in Accra

Swissport International recently announced the opening and operational start of Swissport Ghana. Swissport Ghana is a 50:50 joint venture between Swissport International and Ghana Airport Cargo Centre. GACC itself is the result of a joint venture between Air Ghana, a registered Ghanaian Airline and Logistics Company based in Accra, Ghana, and the Ghana Airports Company, the official operator of all airports and aerodromes in Ghana. Swissport Ghana is to offer cargo warehousing and ramp handling at a brand new cargo warehouse, which is currently under construction and scheduled to be completed in the last guarter of 2015.

In fact, Swissport Ghana was actually established in 2014 in order to prepare for the start of operations and to accompany the planning of the cargo warehouse. The cargo warehouse will be located in a key position next to the airside of Kotoka International airport. It will offer 10,000 square metres of warehousing space, and will be designed to handle all kinds of cargo including perishables, valuables and dangerous goods.

Staff: the heart of the matter?

According to an analysis, employees have been found to be responsible for up to 15% of Air India's flight delays. In consequence, the airline has been directed by the government to penalise these individuals by cutting salaries in a bid to eradicate the problem.

The investigation found that the whole gamut of staff was involved, from flight and cabin crew to catering staff and ground handling personnel. The carrier is currently pursuing a much-vaunted Turnaround Plan, under which it is expected that at least 85% of its flights will depart on time. This lackadaisical attitude on the part of its staff has not helped matters, and indeed, between June and November last year, some 6,513 Air India flights in all were delayed, with 763 cancelled completely.

Unions have had to be consulted in this strategy and at the time of writing, progress was deemed to be positive; moreover, it was expected that a revised pay structure would be in operation by the end of March.

This latter is not necessarily good news, though: the indications are that the salaries of the Air India employees are being restructured in line with the guidelines of the Department of Public Enterprises. So-called "harmonised" wages will be on average around 13% lower than the existing level of wages. A source added that the basic pay and allowances of the employees would be protected, however.

Another UK contract for Air BP

Air BP, the international aviation fuel products and service supplier, recently announced that Gloucestershire airport has signed a three year renewal contract for the exclusive supply of Jet A1 and Avgas 100LL. This extends Air BP's longstanding arrangement of 15 years with the station, which enables a continued seamless service to its customers. The airport is one of the UK's biggest Avgas users and the UK's busiest general aviation airport, handling close to 73,000 movements in 2014.

The new agreement represents further good news for Air BP in the UK and follows the addition of Gama Aviation at Glasgow airport to its network in December last year.

Bangladesh: about turn?

Complaints about the mismanaged state of ground services in Bangladeshi airports have been voiced on several occasions. Critics have pointed to poor luggage handling systems, disorganised and sluggish processes at immigration lines and unhygienic conditions amongst other negative factors, all of which have prompted authorities to look anew at the situation.

To that end, Biman Bangladesh Airlines is to form a joint venture with international agents in an effort to modernise its ground handling services. At present, Biman oversees ground handling management of Dhaka's Shahjalal International, Chittagong's Shah Amanat International and Sylhet's Osmani International, whereas in most countries multiple agents are tasked with managing ground handling services.

Under this initiative, cargo and baggage handling would be fully automated, thereby replacing the current manual system. Foreign partners will be expected to pay a management fee, with Biman retaining full ownership. By giving up its monopoly over ground handling service management, Biman is now looking to boost profitability and efficiency.

US data shows delays reach new low out on the ramp

US airlines had a record year in terms of the fewest long tarmac delays in 2014, according to data recently released by the Transportation Department.

In all, 30 domestic flights suffered tarmac delays that lasted longer than three hours last year; during the same period, just nine international flights were delayed for more than four hours. This data contrasted well with 2009's statistics which revealed that 868 flights suffered lengthy delays; after that year, fines were introduced to try and reduce the numbers. In 2013, 84 domestic flights and 55 international flights suffered, so the results are significant indeed.

Starting in April 2010, the department adopted a rule to penalise airlines for domestic tarmac delays where passengers were not allowed to deplane. Under the rules, the DOT could fine airlines up to US\$27,500 per passenger on flights that crossed these guidelines. The rule was extended to international flights in August 2011, permitting those flights a four-hour ground delay window.

It's been a lesson that the airlines have had to learn the hard way. The biggest





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penalty was announced in January, which was US\$1.6m for 16 Southwest Airlines flight delays a year earlier at Chicago's Midway airport during a snowstorm. Part of the fine will be waived if the airline avoids any other infractions for a 12 month period.

At the time of that infraction, the department had issued a total of US\$5.24m in fines involving 17 cases.

Low cost carrier off to a flying start with Menzies

Menzies Aviation (South Africa) has started to handle the first low cost carrier to enter the South African market since 2013.

Skywise Airlines launched its inaugural flight on February 11 by giving the opportunity to 95 schoolchildren (supported by the Thembekile Mandela Foundation) to fly for their first time from Johannesburg to Cape Town. On the eve of the opening of Parliament in South Africa these children, accompanied by Nelson Mandela's grand-daughter, Ndileka Mandela, had the opportunity to lay a wreath at the foot of the Nelson Mandela statue at parliament in Cape Town.

"In a market with aggressive competitor pricing, the award of a low cost carrier contract is a reflection of the value they place on Menzies' reputation," said lan Van Rooyen, VP South Africa and Namibia. Because of the start-up nature of the airline, the carrier entrusted Menzies with most services in order to let it concentrate on its core offering.

Skywise has ambitious plans to expand operations to the three major stations in South Africa within the next six months. Menzies is providing full passenger, ramp and cleaning services, whilst Skywise becomes the second regional airline to make use of the Menzies DCS facility.

Swissport to open at Astana

On February 9, the Airport Management Group of Astana International airport and Swissport International signed a Memorandum of Understanding in which the parties agreed that Swissport is to take over the complete ground handling operation from Astana International airport; this will occur in two phases.

The co-operation is to commence on May 1, with the newly-established joint venture, that of Swissport Kazakhstan, assuming passenger handling in Astana. In a second phase, the joint venture plans to absorb the entire ground handling services by the end of the year, which will also include ramp and deicing provision.

The basis for this co-operation is the Government of Kazakhstan's wish to advance and upgrade its airports and ground services to make them compliant with international regulations and standards, and to prepare it for the forthcoming EXPO 2017 in Astana.

New Year's Resolution?

Baggage tracking is something that has been a recent focus for IATA and with the introduction of Resolution 753 has come the requirement for IATA members to beef up the delivery process through providing better monitoring of the whole process. This is expected to be up and running by mid-2018. The objectives here are to trim further the percentage of mishandled bags, speed up baggage reconciliation and enhance passenger satisfaction.

The resolution notes, *inter alia*, that developments and changes will be down to IATA members; that members will have to be able to demonstrate delivery of baggage when the state of custody changes; and that data will be exchangeable with relevant airlines. We asked Andrew Price, IATA's Head of Airport Operations, about some of these obligations.

Firstly, this Resolution is addressed to IATA members: will, then, non-IATA members also be expected to adopt such measures? If not, then will this not become something of a one-sided initiative?

"All IATA resolutions apply only to IATA members, and then they are trumped by local and international regulations," replies Andrew. "IATA membership is above 80% of the industry and covers all interline agreements. As we are most interested in interline transfer handling when it comes to baggage mishandling, it is not so one-sided as it may seem at first glance."

Secondly, where does the ground handler fit into this? Will he be expected to implement any specific systems or applications? And will handler A's input end once the bags are loaded and hold doors are closed? If so, at what point does the sequence become handler B's responsibility?

"The handler will be implementing whatever the airline contracts. There are no specific systems that are being specified. Recording acquisition and delivery could be via hand-written sheets, the scanning of baggage labels, recording against manifests or any of a wide number of other possibilities for recording that a bag was moved between two places. The resolution requires recording for arrivals, transfers and aircraft load."

Thirdly, there is mention in the Resolution of evidence being provided to an automatic interline proration process. Could he explain what exactly is meant by this?

"Proration is the process of sharing mishandling costs between airlines when the journey involves more than one carrier. It is normally done according to the mileage flown, unless fault can be shown to rest entirely with one carrier. The automatic proration is about taking a simplified set of cases and then having those automatically attributed to the airline at fault. We are currently looking at implementing a system to do this, as it would greatly help with the efficiency of back office processes for the airline. To the average person, it will not make any difference at all as the passenger is not normally aware of how the cost of any claims is shared between carriers as it is all done after the claim is closed."

In Brief

• Air India SATS Airport Services (AISATS) has received the IATA Safety Audit for Ground Operations certification for adhering to IATA's stringent and high safety standards at Rajiv Gandhi International airport, Hyderabad as well as its headquarters at Mumbai.

• Khartoum was in the news this last month when carriers looked at suspending flights to both Khartoum and Port Sudan in view of the anticipated rise in tariffs for ground handling services.

The Civil Aviation Authority was reportedly planning to increase prices by 250% in early March. Foreign airlines were quick to send a letter to the authority, explaining that they already had in place contracts with ground handling companies. They claim that the Civil Aviation has no right to increase the tariffs for these services at will.

• Swissport International has been voted the best cargo handler in Africa for the third year in a row by the readers of *The STAT Trade Times Magazine*. Swissport received the award during the Air Cargo Africa 2015 trade event.

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Premises, premises...

Gemma James, a partner at Mundays law firm, takes a closer look at what's involved in occupying property at an airport.

hen a ground handling company takes space at an airport, it is important it knows what it is agreeing to in terms of its property rights within the airport in order to make optimal use of the premises and ensure efficiency and maximum profitability.

With commercial deliveries to airports on the rise, companies will want to ensure that their premises can meet the growing demand. The negotiating and preparing of contracts and other legal documents for property space plays a very important *rôle* in meeting a business' requirements.

Companies taking on warehouse-style properties in or around airports have to negotiate a purchase price if buying a freehold or renting, and additional terms if taking a lease. Planning ahead is important for many reasons, not least to ensure optimal location for the ease of freight forwarders and air cargo handlers to do their jobs efficiently. Below are some points to consider in order to maximise the rewards you can reap from your property arrangements while minimising stress (and expenditure) further down the line.

Property type considerations

Firstly, do you need a freehold or a leasehold property? A freehold is a major capital investment to fund from the outset, but it becomes yours to deal with as you wish. A lease would be for an agreed period of time only, so is useful if you may need flexibility to move on in case your supply contracts change. However, it places you somewhat at the will of the landlord and liable to pay rent and possibly service charges. A licence or a tenancy at will is even more flexible, but may involve sharing occupation, would not be transferable and is usually a very short term arrangement.

Take your accountant's advice as to your tax position. Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) on a freehold purchase is based on the purchase price whereas a more complex calculation is used to calculate SDLT for a lease (which is based primarily on the rent and length of term). Don't forget Capital Gains Tax and allowances, especially if you intend to carry out works. Careful tax planning might lead you to purchase in the name of a company or of individuals, and the latter can have inheritance tax implications too.

If you choose a lease, you should consider the following.

The landlord may ask you for a rent deposit as security, so either ensure you have funds available or be prepared to offer a compromise on the lease terms, such as offering guarantors.

If you have an option to renew or a break clause, make careful note of deadlines for serving notice to exercise them and seek legal advice well in advance to ensure that you do not lose the right.

Try to limit your liabilities, such as not being required to repair the premises to a standard beyond that shown in a photographic schedule of condition, and ensure an independent surveyor assesses the current state of the premises for you. Check if the landlord is planning works to the warehouse and surrounding area (which may increase your service charges) and ideally try to cap the annual service charge for which you will be liable.

Make financial provisions and arrangements with contractors well in advance of the end of the term so that dilapidations obligations will not come as a shock.

When negotiating lease terms, remember that any clauses that benefit you as a tenant can also count against you at rent review because a more tenant-friendly lease could be valued as "deserving" a higher rent.

Do you need specific ability to share occupation of your premises with other companies? A specific clause permitting this will be necessary.

You will need the landlord's consent to make alterations and you may well have to remove all such works at the end of the lease. If the works are vital, it is best to agree them with the landlord from the start to save the risk of the landlord refusing consent in the future.

Think, too, about exit strategy: do you need a break clause or the ability to assign or sub-let all or part of the premises? You will probably have to obtain the Landlord's consent to do so at the time and will have to pay its costs. The Landlord will want to impose conditions, so before entering the lease, consider the conditions you would be prepared to offer.

Finally, if moving premises, consider entering an Agreement to Surrender with your current landlord and an Agreement to Lease with your new landlord: if you exchange both Agreements at the same time, you will then have the contractual certainty of a completion date for the end of your old lease and for the start of your new lease.

Perhaps most importantly of all, seek advice from a solicitor, accountant and surveyor at the outset. It is advisable to also engage the services of a property agent to act on your behalf in negotiating terms: agents will know the local market and be best placed to advise on rent levels and general bargaining points to negotiate the optimal deal!



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Air France cargo signs on with CHEP Aerospace

Air France Cargo has appointed CHEP Aerospace Solutions to repair its fleet of cargo containers, pallets and horse boxes at Paris Charles de Gaulle airport, as well as dollies at Paris Orly airport, over the next three years.

This new partnership complements CHEP's existing relationship with KLM and Martinair in Amsterdam and positions CHEP as a strategic maintenance and repair partner for the Air France KLM Group.

CHEP's data-rich repair management software ACTIS will provide Air France Cargo with the benefit of being able to identify damage trends and related costs. This data will enable Air France Cargo to make more informed decisions on future ULD purchases and will facilitate working with ground handlers to reduce damage to ULDs.

China Zenix Auto signs new contract with Cargotec

China Zenix Auto International, the largest commercial vehicle wheel manufacturer in China by sales volume, announced January 27 that it has signed a contract to supply advanced tubeless steel wheels to the Cargotec Trading Company in Shanghai in 2015.

Zenix Auto will supply its tubeless steel wheels, produced using its new patented steel rolling process, to Cargotec Shanghai's heavy-duty terminal tractors. The company's advanced steel wheels can carry heavier loads than traditionally rolled steel wheels and are less susceptible to deformation and damage.

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer for China Zenix, Mr Jianhui Lai, commented: "Shanghai is one of the busiest ports in the world and an important transit point for the export and import of products in China. Our wheels are improving the efficiency of moving goods through this busy port. As we continue to improve the durability, weight and overall quality of our wheels, we strengthen current customer relationships and expect to attract additional new customers."

CAL Cargo Airlines takes over bankrupt Cyprus Airways

CAL Cargo Airlines has stepped in to replace the cargo division of Cyprus Airways after it declared bankruptcy on January 9. The 68 year old, stateowned Cypriot carrier was ordered to pay back about €65m in illegal state aid by EU regulators in Brussels and was consequently declared no longer "economically viable" by Finance Minister Harris Georgiades.

Eyal Zagagi, CAL Cargo Airlines' CEO, said: "Cyprus is a key market for us. We feel accountable to our customers in that region and made a big effort to ensure a smooth transition." The government of Cyprus is looking into starting a new airline if it can find serious investors, and has already secured the Cyprus Airways logo if successful. The airline lost €55.8m in 2012, more than double the €23.88m loss in 2011.

Twice-weekly flights using B747 freighter aircraft have since commenced from Liège, Belgium, to Larnaca, Cyprus, and Tel-Aviv-Yafo, Israel.

Chateauroux-Centre to gain new distribution warehouse

Marcel Dassault airport, located in the centre of France, is set to become the home of a large distribution hub called EuroSity. The Franco-Chinese subsidiary of property developers Beijing Capital Land, SFECZ, will construct the 1.3m square-foot warehouse in Chateauroux-Centre, an area dedicated to freight, eight hours by truck to Paris and other major European cities. The conveniently located facility, which will comprise more than 30,000 square feet of office space and other amenities. is intended to address the needs of Chinese shippers, who want fast access to European households with manufactured goods. Chateauroux-Centre is an ideal locale for freighter activity, boasting the longest runway in Europe (at 11,482 feet), which can effortlessly accommodate the largest of freight carriers, and has excellent rail and highway connections. Construction of the hub is expected to commence in late 2015, with occupancy expected in the second half of 2016.

Boston Logan airport to be served by Icelandair Cargo

A weekly service by Icelandair Cargo from Boston Logan airport to its hub in Keflavik, Iceland, will begin January 22, thanks to a rise in demand for fresh seafood from Iceland. Of the recent surge, Icelandair Cargo Managing Director, Gunnar Mar Sigurfinnsson, said: "We have seen a year-on-year increase in seafood volumes to the US market every year from 2011." He went on to say that Boston is the company's largest market for seafood, but that additionally the carrier runs twice-weekly freighter calls at New York's JFK, and daily passenger flights to Boston and JFK.

The new service earns Icelandair Cargo the accolade of the only carrier that offers a scheduled all-cargo freighter service from Boston Logan to Europe.

TNT launches daily cargo service to Istanbul by road

TNT has introduced an express road service to Istanbul, connecting the Turkish capital to Sofia, Bulgaria, and on to all European countries, which will run daily.

The freighter company claims to be the only express operator to run such a service between Istanbul and Europe in its entirety, dubbing it a consistent, economical alternative for less urgent shipments (which will take between four and seven days to deliver, depending on distance of the European business recipient). TNT currently runs an overnight air express service to Istanbul but this is to be its first road service to the destination.

TNT's Turkish network comprises 26 hubs and depots, as well as a fleet of 328 vehicles, which connect Istanbul with other major cities, such as Ankara, Izmir, Adana and Bursa.

Cathay is now freight-fully appy

Cathay Pacific has introduced a mobile app that allows the tracking of shipments and provides other freight data for its customers. The app has several useful functions, including tracking of multiple air waybills, saving air waybills as favourites and the latest flight arrival and departure times.

With the help of the app, customers are able to track their shipments through their smart phone or tablet at any time and from anywhere. They can also log in to review the e-booking status of their shipment, in just the same way as they would through Cathay's cargo website.

James Woodrow, Cathay Pacific Director of Cargo, said: "We strive to provide the best services to our customers at all times, and this new mobile app puts up-to-the-minute information at their fingertips, wherever in the world they may be."

The app is available for download from both the Apple iTunes and Google Play stores.

AirBridgeCargo carries record volume of cargo in 2014

AirBridgeCargo carried a record 401,000 tonnes of cargo in 2014: a 17.6% increase year-over-year and its highest total tonnage in ten years



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of business. The carrier operates a 13-strong fleet after adding another B747-8 freighter last year, and opened new routes to Dallas/Fort Worth, Leipzig, Munich, Basel and Malmo, while adding frequencies to Chicago and Milan, amongst others. The carrier runs 218 scheduled flights a week to 11 different countries, totalling more than 400 connections.

"Thanks to this growing support, ABC has been able to grow consistently with a compound growth rate of 11% over the last five years," said Denis Ilin, ABC's Executive President. According to Denis, the company intends to further enlarge its network with additional destinations in an effort to support smaller businesses, or even short-term business opportunities."

Full year cargo rise at Athens

Athens airport saw a 3.3% rise in cargo volumes across its four terminals for the whole of 2014, with total tonnage increasing to 77,327 tonnes.

Of the achievement, Alexis Sioris, Manager Cargo Development at Athens International airport, said: "Economic pressure has encouraged us all to raise our game and combine strengths and be more pro-active in generating new business. Our modern airport infrastructure, plus excellent world-connected port, backed by top class handlers and forwarders, gives us the tools for the job."

As part of the airport's improved facilities for shippers and customers, electronic payment of duties and taxes will be introduced, which will enable payment by bank transfer as well as keep accounts open with the Ministry of Finance.

Current handlers at Athens airport include Goldair Handling, Skyserv Handling Services (previously Olympic Handling) and Swissport Hellas Cargo.

PacAvi to carry out first P2F conversion on A320 aircraft

PacAvi Group, a US- and Germanbased company, is to convert its first Airbus A320 from a passenger aircraft to a freighter at HAITEC Aircraft Maintenance, an MRO based at Frankfurt-Hahn airport. This is to be the first passenger to freighter conversion of an A320, which is expected to be converted rapidly, once final approval is given by the FAA and the European Aviation Safety Agency, which PacAvi CEO Stephan Hollmann said he expects to receive in 2016. He went on to say: "From then on, our plan is to grow fast. There are 50-60 narrow-body freighters of A320 and A321 size produced annually, and we are well positioned to dominate this market in the coming years. We expect HAITEC to account for about a dozen commercial conversions a year."

Potential customers for the aircraft are yet to be disclosed; however it is believed that PacAvi will start to announce customers shortly. Once converted, the maximum structural payload of the aircraft would be up to approximately 21 tonnes.

In addition to this conversion news, Precision Aircraft Solutions said it has begun converting a Rolls-Roycepowered B757 aircraft into a freighter configuration for Chinese cargo carrier SF Airlines, which will be its tenth conversion performed for the company.

AirBridgeCargo Airlines extends contract with Fraport

AirBridgeCargo and Fraport Cargo Services have extended their cargo handling partnership at Europe's leading airfreight hub in Frankfurt, continuing a successful collaboration which began back in August 2008.

FCS Managing Director, Diana Schöneich, said: "We consider this decision as a clear proof of confidence in our company, since AirBridgeCargo is an airline with high standards of security, quality, and service. We will continue to do our utmost to meet the expectations of our largest customer also in the future."

ABC Airlines, one of the fastest growing international air cargo carriers, currently operates an impressive fleet of 13 Boeing 747 freighters, including 6 of the new generation B747-8F aircraft.

Since its inception, the partnership has thrived, overcoming a number of challenges, offering high flexibility, top standards, qualified staff, and customised solutions.

Asia Pacific Airlines see 2014 resurgence in cargo demand

Following three consecutive years of decline, Association of Asia Pacific Airlines' initial figures for 2015 are indicating an encouraging renewal in cargo demand.

The airline has seen noticeable growth in both the cargo and passenger markets in 2014. Business and recreational travel has been boosted by improved regional economies in Asia and increased trade, and freight-tonne kilometres have grown by a strong 5.4% compared to 2013 figures. Additionally, the carrier's freight capacity grew modestly at 4.1% last year, resulting in a 0.8% increase in the average international freight load factor.

Andrew Herdman, AAPA Director General, said: "Air cargo markets experienced a welcome upswing in 2014, with the second half of the year registering 6% growth compared to the same period in 2013, following several years of stagnant demand."

Air cargo statistics went out on a high for 2014

A demand growth of 4.5% (compared to 2013) was revealed in IATA's full-year air cargo data for 2014; a significant rise from the 1.4% increase recorded between 2012 and 2013. In December alone, growth reached 4.9%.

Growth was recorded in all regions in 2014 but the majority was specifically located in the Asia-Pacific and Middle Eastern regions, which contributed 46% and 29% respectively of the expansion in FTKs. Particularly weak in terms of development was Latin America.

Tony Tyler, IATA Director General and CEO, said: "After several years of stagnation, the air cargo business is growing again. This is largely being driven by the uptick in world trade over the second half of 2014. Recent concerns over the health of the global economy and a corresponding fall in business confidence have not yet impacted air cargo. But it is a downside risk that will need to be watched carefully as we move through 2015."

Mumbai cargo goes paperless

The paperless initiative aims to gradually eliminate the substantial quantity of paper documents the air cargo industry currently relies on to support air freight movement. With that in mind, Mumbai International has launched a joint venture between the Airports Authority of India and a GVK-led association, each having 26% and 74% holding respectively.

The e-freight initiative was first unveiled by IATA back in 2006, and endorsed by members of GACAG, with the goal of replacing paper with electronic data and messages in air cargo operations. The green venture implicates air carriers, freight forwarders, ground handlers, shippers and customs authorities, encouraging them to simplify processes, reduce expenditure and improve efficiency and reliability.

MIAL's Chief Executive, Rajeev Jain, added: "MIAL is proud to be a part of the IATA e-freight initiative and it sincerely appreciates the support extended by IATA to enable it achieve this significant milestone."

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Turkish Cargo launches new freight facility

Turkish Cargo has expanded, not only in terms of its cargo network, but also in the form of ongoing improvements to its infrastructure and technical procedures.

On January 1 2015, a new cargo terminal was opened and, following a smooth transition to the new facility, its full utilisation has vastly improved the handling and transfer of freight. With the launch of this facility, operational processes have been restructured and the quality of service has been maximised.

Turkish Cargo provides global connections to a network of more than 260 destinations in 108 countries, currently served by its nine freighters with 48 destinations and 253 passenger aircraft.

E-AWB milestone reached by Nordic countries

It was announced during the Nordic Air Cargo Symposium in Stockholm that the air freight industry of Scandinavia has reached IATA's 22% global target for adoption of electronic air waybill technology. Denmark scored 23%, Finland 25%, Sweden 15% and Norway 7%, surpassing a combined aim of 22%. Introducing electronic air waybills completely eliminates the need for paper, and involves the World Customs Organisation (WCO), ground handlers, freight forwarders and airlines.

Nine IATA member airlines have taken up the top spot in the Nordic market to implement the e-AWB: SAS Cargo, Lufthansa Cargo, Air France/KLM, Finnair, Korean Air, Cathay Pacific, Qatar Airways and Emirates.

By the end of last year, global e-AWB adoption stood at 24%. IATA hopes its members will go 100% paperless by the end of 2017.

Cargo Human Care eV sets medical care record in 2014

Cargo Human Care eV, a humanitarian and medical aid project founded by employees of Lufthansa Cargo in cooperation with doctors from all over Germany, set a new medical care record in 2014. Medical care was administered around 22,500 times to patients treated by local nurses and German doctors, with around 6,500 patients receiving treatment in six disciplines at the medical centre in Nairobi, Kenya. Their work was supported both financially and logistically throughout the endeavour by Lufthansa Cargo, who founded Cargo Human Care eV back in 2007.

Lufthansa Cargo Fleet Commander and Chairman of Cargo Human Care eV, Captain Fokko Doyen, said: "With our free medical aid we ensure that the poorest of the population have access to medical care in the region around Nairobi. Last year, Cargo Human Care was able to extend the range of its treatments once again - also thanks to generous donations."

Additionally, cancer screening for women became available last year, along with plastic surgery, German specialists and the local hospital, together with an eye clinic for the treatment of cataracts.

The second major project of Cargo Human Care eV is the Mothers' Mercy Home, a children's home in Nairobi which provides more than 115 orphans with somewhere to live and a future. With the help of a donation campaign by German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, a youth centre – a



transitional residence for children from the Mothers' Mercy Home, offering post-school education and integration into working life – will also be built.

AISATS wins Best Air Cargo Terminal Management Award

For the fourth consecutive year, Air India SATS Airport Services (AISATS) was recognised with the Best Air Cargo Terminal Management Award from the Indian Chamber of Commerce. The certification was awarded at the Indian Supply Chain Logistics Summit & Excellence Award 2015, hosted in New Delhi.

Mike Chew, SVP Delhi and Acting CEO of AISATS, accepted the award, saying: "This accolade holds testimony to our consistent effort to provide customers with premier cargo and ground handling services. We strive to continue augmenting our services through innovation, technology and service enhancements."

Nominees for the award are evaluated on a variety of aspects including operational performance, sustainability, guality, safety, customer satisfaction and adoption of information technology. AISATS has excelled in many of these areas over the last year, including the implementation of an e-freight initiative at its Bengaluru Airfreight Terminal facility, in accordance with IATA's green initiative of a paper-free air cargo supply chain. The Bengaluru facility also acquired its Good Distribution Practices certification, making AISATS the first service provider in India to gain such recognition.

Finnair Cargo joins IAG Cargo's Partner Plus programme

Finnair Cargo is to join IAG Cargo's Partner Plus programme, an enhanced version of interline co-operation. This partnership enables both IAG Cargo and Finnair to deliver improved network connectivity to customers of the scheme, who will benefit from confirmed bookings and higher priority for loading with IAG Cargo, the freight arm of British Airways and Iberia.

Other members of the scheme include Qatar Airways, Japan Airlines, the Avianca group and American Airlines.

Steve Gunning, CEO of IAG Cargo, said of the programme: "The benefit for customers is clear and with the addition of Finnair we are now able to deliver enhanced connectivity to key destinations... this is a hugely cost-effective means of growing our network reach."

The acquisition of Finnair will afford IAG Cargo additional capacity across the globe, including strategic destinations in the Asia Pacific region. Finnair customers, meanwhile, will benefit from IAG Cargo's farreaching network to the Americas and Africa, as the introduction of the IAG connections offers greater route availability via London Heathrow and Madrid International airport.

African market highlighted by Cargolux after conference

Following the recent Air Cargo Africa event, Cargolux has reaffirmed its interest in the continent.

"The markets in Africa are especially important to Cargolux", explains Niek van der Weide, Executive Vice President of Cargolux. "Our network here significantly supports the Cargolux business worldwide."

Cargolux has been investing in the African market for years and offers 11 flights per week from Luxembourg to several African countries. The flights not only connect Luxembourg to the African continent, but also connect the US directly to Africa. In all, Cargolux operates flights to 13 different African destinations and has offices at all the important trade hubs in Africa.

The carrier brings commodities like automotive parts, heavy machinery for the oil and gas industry, perishables and pharmaceutical products to these markets and develops tailor-made solutions for dynamic commodity flows.

Seasonal bloom for Kenyan freight to Schiphol

Saudia Cargo has had to increase freighter activity from Nairobi to Amsterdam by at least six additional B747F flights because of seasonal demand for Kenyan flowers.

The 25% boost on the Africa to Europe route equates to an extra 3,000 tonnes of cargo for the month of February, in addition to the Middle Eastern carrier's existing six scheduled flights a week out of Nairobi.

Saudia Cargo's Regional Director Africa, Ken Mbogo, said that the carrier's "proven agility to deploy extra frequencies during such seasonal peak periods has amplified our position as a leading carrier in the Kenyan airfreight market." He went on to say the need for additional freighter services "serves as a yet another powerful testimony of our steady progressive support to the Kenyan floricultural industry."

DIAL to exit cargo service operations at Delhi International

Delhi International Airport, a subsidiary of GMR Infrastructure, has announced its withdrawal from the cargo service operations at Delhi airport.

GMR Infrastructure is selling its entire 26% stake in a cargo handling joint venture at Indira Gandhi International airport to India Infrastructure Fund for Rs 29 crore. On February 20 DIAL agreed to sell its holding of 1.09 crore equity shares (of face value Rs 10 each) for Rs 26.20 per share, totalling Rs 28.60 crore. A GMR Infrastructure regulatory filing to Bombay Stock Exchange said the completion of the sale is subject to the fulfilment of certain criteria.

Following the announcement, shares in GMR Infrastructure rose 1.08% and were trading at Rs 18.70 on the BSE.

Swissport wins best cargo handler award in Africa

Swissport has been voted best cargo handler in Africa for the third time in a row by the readers of *The STAT Trade Times Magazine*. Swissport received the Award during Air Cargo Africa 2015, the continent's largest air cargo trade fair.

As part of the respected "International Awards for Excellence in Air Cargo", the award is widely regarded as the premier accolade for cargo handlers operating in the rapidly developing region. Swissport was chosen for the distinctive honour from various air cargo industry players.

Nils Pries Knudsen, SVP and Head of Global Cargo Swissport International, said of the achievement: "It makes us proud to see recognition for the efforts Swissport employees undertake every single day. We will work very hard to continue to deliver this level of dedication and quality."

Fire hazard on board

In 2014, the International Civil Aviation Organisation adopted a ban on the shipping of lithium batteries as cargo aboard passenger aircraft. This came in the wake of growing concerns that if these batteries were to become ignited, they could affect any nearby batteries, causing them to overheat and catch fire in turn. During that same year, most passenger airlines in Canada had already voluntarily banned lithium metal batteries as freight, although the ban was not due to come into effect until January this year. Under the terms of the legislation, batteries already contained in or packed with equipment are not affected: only those packaged

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and shipped separately are being targeted. The ban was not intended to affect a passenger's personal devices such as laptops and smartphones, which typically employ lithium-ion batteries.

More recently, United Airlines has banned the bulk shipment of lithiumion batteries on its aircraft, again citing fire safety concerns. In this move, United has followed Delta Air Lines, which decided in February to refuse bulk shipments of the type of batteries used in mobile devices. The decision means that United is now the second major US airline to ban the bulk shipping of lithium-ion batteries.

"Our primary concerns when transporting dangerous goods are the safety of our customers, our customers' shipments and the environment," the carrier was guoted as saying.

Behind all this has been the Federal Aviation Administration, which has been testing the volatility of these batteries. In one test, the FAA filled a cargo container with 5,000 lithiumion batteries and a cartridge heater. This was to simulate a single battery overheating. Perhaps predictably, the single overheating battery triggered a chain reaction, with temperatures in the container attaining around 600°C. This was succeeded by an explosion. In a separate test, similar results were recorded.

There is a suspicion that these batteries have also contributed to aircraft crashes. It is known that the Malaysia Airlines flight, which went missing last year, was carrying 440 pounds of lithium-ion batteries in its hold; however, there is no concrete proof that this cargo was responsible for the aircraft's failure.

The recent loss of two Boeing 747 freighters, is another case in point. One, operated by UPS, developed an in-flight fire in 2010 and crashed in Dubai. A subsequent FAA investigation noted the large quantity of lithium-ion batteries had been carried on board.

Some 12 months later, an Asiana Airlines cargo aircraft carrying 880 pounds of lithium batteries crashed into the Korea Strait. None of the crew on either aircraft survived the crash.

There have also been incidents Given that many consumer devices today are powered by this technology, it rather begs the question of what the future holds. With several airlines refusing their carriage, one is tempted to believe that others will surely follow in their wake. If that occurs, then li-ion batteries will have to rely upon sea and land transportation to reach their final destinations.

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Innsbruck in the clouds

Amadeus, a leading technology partner for the global travel industry, has announced that it has reached an agreement with Innsbruck airport to deliver a range of new airport solutions. These comprise the Airport Common Use Service, Airport Baggage Reconciliation System and Airport Passenger Verification facility. Thanks to the launch of common use application last year, Innsbruck is now pioneering the implementation of new technology in the airport ecosystem, moving towards the next generation of common use platforms.

The agreement will see the first complete cloud-based common use environment in an airport. Whereas previous common use solutions ran off local servers, the ACUS installation allows Innsbruck's airlines and ground handling companies to leverage application virtualisation and cloud technology to access passenger processing systems. The platform is hosted in Amadeus' centralised data processing facility in Germany, which will eliminate the costly reliance on onsite IT infrastructure and reduce energy costs. This cloud-based solution will also provide logistical benefits to the airport, allowing Innsbruck to easily reassign passenger check-in and boarding operations to alternative locations, even off-airport, when necessary. This will reduce the impact of disruption on both passengers and airlines.

Innsbruck airport is also implementing Amadeus' Baggage Reconciliation System. As with ACUS, using a common data source will save Innsbruck airline customers the burden of exchanging costly baggage messages. The system requires minimal training and no server installation and therefore, as a result, allows for a rapid deployment.

Amadeus' Airport Passenger Verification, the third solution to be employed by Innsbruck, will permit automated passenger checks at various points within the airport. The airport believes that the resulting data will help enhance the passenger experience, as the airport can make informed decisions at critical moments, offering more tailored services or selling airport loyalty programmes.

No CUSS? No fuss!

Pulse.aero started up in 2009, initially servicing bmibaby at East Midlands airport. Today the company is the number one provider of self-service bag drop facilities in Europe, possibly in the world, on the strength of installed bases. This is very much a home-grown company with a development team based in Brighton and a hardware team in Nottingham.

Phase 5 Technology (the hardware arm) is responsible for the design and operation of the SONIC Bag Drop solution, which is currently installed and operational in a total of 13 airports. The specialist recently installed a further ten units at Edinburgh airport and for March, it was looking to install facilities in Bournemouth, Madrid and Barcelona; at the time of writing, it was in tender processes for several other airports, too.

Currently Phase 5 provides services for bags and passengers for CityJet, easyJet, Flybe, Ryanair and Loganair, and is in the process of integrating several other carriers. In terms of a credo, the company says it looks to devise and deploy solutions that take all the complexity (and associated cost) out of passenger processing.

Its SONIC application runs entirely on a multi-cloud environment. What this means is that to deploy and use SONIC, the customer only needs power and an Internet connection. Because SONIC is not restricted by CUPPS, CUSS or CUTE, it can process payments, deploy weekly updates, add passport details, update SSRs and provide a whole host of other functions automatically. However SONIC still conforms to applicable IATA protocols and the company's Technical Director is helping develop the IATA Common Use Web Services.

Another accolade for CHAMP

The STAT Trade Times recently presented the STAT Times International Awards for Excellence in Air Cargo in 11 categories, as part of the Air Cargo Africa 2015 conference, which was held in South Africa in March. During the event CHAMP Cargosystems was nominated International IT Systems Provider of the Year in Africa for the second year in a row.

This award once again recognises CHAMP's contribution as an industry leader in the provision of a most comprehensive range of integrated IT solutions and distribution services for the air cargo industry.



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Flawless thoughts

Here, Sam Crooks, Operations and Technical Manager at Gulf Aviation, discusses the issues surrounding fuel safety and gives advice on how to combat any potential issues.

t Gulf Aviation, we have always Λ fostered a "Safety First" culture Δ and we work directly with customers to advise them on how best to put this into practice during refuelling. We advise not only on current statutory and industry regulations for example, the Health and Safety act, Health Safety Environment and Security and Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations - but also on best practice, to ensure that the likelihood of accidents occurring is minimised. It's essential that processes are constantly reviewed to ensure that best practice is always adhered to and that teams do not become complacent with regard to safety.

Refuelling vehicles are constantly being driven around some of the world's busiest airports. There is every conceivable vehicle vying for their (mostly) dedicated service area around the aircraft. During actual refuelling operations, there is a hive of activity at the aircraft and operators need to be ever vigilant for anything that could potentially cause damage to the refueller or the refuelling hose. With so many people and so much equipment involved, there is a need to constantly remind operatives to adhere to best practice.

The 2012 Aviation Fuel Quality Control and Operating Standards for Into-Plane Fuelling Services (known as JIG1) offers full guidance on how to tackle all issues surrounding fuelling and safety on the apron. The document outlines the full regulations, including the importance of the following points.

Points to note

First, it is essential that the exit path of a refuelling vehicle is kept clear. If this is a continuing problem, it should be brought to the attention of the airport authority.

Second, delivery hoses and hydrant servicer inlet hoses must be positioned carefully on selected routes to minimise the risk of hoses being damaged by vehicles or even by baggage handling equipment. Kinks and twists in hoses can cause serious fuelling and safety issues.

Third, hydrant servicer inlet hoses, inlet couplers and hydrant pit valves can be damaged by other aircraft servicing vehicles. This could contribute to a fire and thus poses a risk to the personal safety of those around the aircraft. The hydrant pit and hydrant servicer inlet hose both need to be as visible as possible. This can be achieved by using high visibility road cones, inlet hose collars and warning signs.

In addition to these regulations, there have been a number of safety initiatives rolled out in the UK over the



"Safety first" culture has a long tradition at Gulf Aviation, says Sam Crooks

past few years and the Civil Aviation Authority has been at the forefront of the developments. The Ground Handling **Operations Safety Team (or GHOST)** industry group was formed to address and share information pertaining to ground handling issues with an aim of improving safety in all areas. It identifies specific issues within the industry using Mandatory Occurrence Reporting data and feedback from airport individuals and working group members. Another initiative rolled out last year was the Just Culture, a promotion to increase the safety standards of airport ground handling operations, specifically targeting a reporting culture for safetyrelated incidents among airside workers.

As a result, into-plane operatives working with fuel and other essential fluids will be encouraged to make good use of the CAA's Mandatory Occurrence Reporting process if any of the following events occur.

First, significant spillage during fuelling operations. Significant spillage can be defined as a spillage unable to be contained or controlled by the ground service provider's spill kit.

Second, loading of incorrect fuel quantities on to an aircraft that's likely to have a significant effect on aircraft endurance, performance, balance or structural strength.

Third, the loading of contaminated or an incorrect type of fuel.

The industry is taking steps in the right direction to ensure that regulations and best practice are adhered to at all times. As well as using internal incident, accident and reporting systems, sharing knowledge across the industry is essential in making sure we are tackling any unsafe practices. Nothing helps deepen knowledge as effectively as sharing it. To that end, we welcome any initiatives that make sure staff feel comfortable in reporting any issues with regards to safety.

The aviation industry, and indeed technology, never stands still and we keep pushing to enhance our operational performance. Combining these facts with ever-increasing passenger numbers and aircraft movements, we all need to keep safe, vigilant and aware of our surroundings to ensure that we operate as safely as possible.

Corporate responsibility in Latin America for carbon emissions

The Latin American airline group, LaTam, has joined forces with SCX, a private climate stock exchange in the southern hemisphere, to launch a programme that is dedicated to offsetting carbon emissions from corporate air travel.

The programme, called Neutravel, has already attracted ten clients who between them account for over 17,000 tonnes of CO_2 . In its first year, it is aiming to reach 50,000 tonnes, a figure that is the equivalent to the carbon captured in one year by planting more than 6m native trees. Partner companies are set to neutralise emissions through investments in certified emission compensation projects in the region, together with accredited in-house reductions.

SCX has said that it will provide a platform for measuring and verifying emissions from any business air travel on any global airline. For its part, the LaTam group is happy to provide companies taking part in the programme with specific emission factor information relating to their business flights in order to support the measurement of their carbon footprint.

Projects currently covered by Neutravel include nature conservation initiatives and non-conventional renewable energy projects.

The partners add that the programme, which has been launched initially in Chile before it is extended to other countries in the region, has been designed in accordance with the most rigorous criteria and methodologies for measuring greenhouse gas emissions and that it fully complies with IATA recommendations.

Indian handler begins to deploy biodiesel at Bengaluru

Air India SATS Airport Services (AISATS) has initiated the usage of renewable and clean burning biodiesel at its Bengaluru Airfreight Terminal. This has had the effect of making Kempegowda International in Bengaluru the first station across the AISATS airfreight terminal network to be powered



by biodiesel. This is in line with the Government of India's initiative to encourage the production and use of biodiesel in the country, which allows the direct sale of biodiesel by manufacturers.

AISATS is the first concessionaire at Kempegowda International to use this fuel in line with its commitment towards implementing sustainable practices. The biodiesel, which is sourced from Eco Green Fuels Private, a Bangalore-based company, is a renewable, domestically produced, clean burning diesel replacement that will reduce the dependence on petroleum and can be used in all standard diesel engines. Compared to regular fuel, biodiesel effectively reduces the emission of harmful pollutants, thereby reducing the impact on the environment.

Willy Ko, AISATS' CEO, confirmed that he had always been committed to minimising the impact of his operational processes on the environment.

"Utilising biodiesel is another stride towards fulfilling our desire to protect the environment. Not only will this green initiative increase operational efficiency but it will also help to preserve the environment by effectively reducing the carbon footprint."

"BIAL took a conscious decision to develop Kempegowda International airport into a green infrastructure. Hence we deployed biofuel for all our ground operations in 2012 as a responsible way to meet our energy needs. AISATS has joined us in our efforts to create an enabling and

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sustainable environment with the commitment to use renewable and clean burning biodiesel at its Bengaluru Airfreight Terminal. This, we believe, is a collaborative effort to demonstrate our commitment for a green environment as an airport community and we applaud AISATS for this initiative," added G V Sanjay Reddy, Managing Director, BIAL.

Currently, biodiesel is being used in conjunction with forklifts at AISATS Bengaluru Airfreight Terminal. Recently, the AISATS Bangalore facility also launched an e-freight initiative aimed at building a paper-free air cargo supply chain. These are seen as significant steps that AISATS has taken towards improving efficiency while contributing towards environmental sustainability.

Fossil fuel to fall in Scandinavia

The Swedish airport operator Swedavia is increasing its commitment towards lowering fossil CO_2 emissions. To that end, Swedavia has become the first airport operator in the Nordic countries to join the Fly Green Fund.

Swedavia actively supports the development of biojet fuels in the Nordic countries and the access to biojet fuels at its ten airports around Sweden.

The co-operation is a natural step for Swedavia in its long-term work to decrease its own environmental footprint. It wants to be in the forefront by taking action, and sees in joining the Fly Green Fund an opportunity to kick-start the market for biojet fuels in the Nordic region. At the same time, this is a part of Swedavia's longterm responsibility, which includes supporting research and development of biojet fuels in the Nordic countries, says Lena Wennberg, Sustainability and Environmental Manager, Swedavia.

The Fly Green Fund is a Nordic initiative (initiated by Karlstad airport and SkyNRG) that gives companies and organisations the opportunity to decrease their environmental impact by flying on biojet fuel. This is achieved through co-funding the extra costs currently existing for biojet fuels relative to fossil fuels. Furthermore, the fund will support the development of sustainable biojet fuel production from Nordic forestry residues and wastes.

Winnipeg to LEED the way

Winnipeg's Richardson International airport has become the first airport terminal in Canada to become LEED certified. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification system is used in 150 countries and is a mark of excellence for green buildings. It provides independent, third-party verification that a building, home or community was designed and built using strategies that ensure high performance in areas such as sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality. The terminal, designed by architects Stantec, achieved a Silver rating, which the airport says was actually beyond the category initially targeted.

LEED strategies that were implemented in the terminal's design include daylight optimisation to provide passengers an uninterrupted view of the prairie landscape and daylight sensors that switch on electric lighting when needed. Heating and cooling is provided to the building by circulating warm or cool water through flexible tubing located within the floor. Heated or cooled air is also introduced into the building at or near floor level, so that the least amount of energy is used to keep passengers comfortable.

The windows and roof are significantly more insulated than conventional products, says the airport, which results in better energy efficiency as well as preventing jet fuel emissions from entering the building.

In the 51,500 square metre terminal's construction, maximum use was made of recyclable materials and local products and materials were sourced whenever possible to minimise the energy used in transportation.

Glycol: a thing of the past?

Regular readers will know that part of the downside of the de-icing operation lies in the application (and subsequent retrieval) of glycol. The system, it has to be said, is the product of many years of development and refinement and thus is not going to fade away in the near future. Despite that, the whole concept of the operation hasn't prevented scientists from thinking laterally and seeking new solutions to what is, in essence, an age-old problem.

To date there has been talk of some sort of heater system installed under the skin of the aircraft: such a thermal blanket, to put it crudely, has promise yet it's a long way from commercialisation. After all, the airframe manufacturers need to be convinced first. Then there has been the idea of a separate hangar inside which heating elements melt the frost and snow accumulation on an aircraft: this idea led to the construction of a handful of such facilities. If we add to that new techniques, such as practised by IDS, whereby it is the operation that is costed and not the actual amount of glycol, and it becomes obvious that there are a lot of initiatives cropping up in the sector.

The latest suggestion comes courtesy of a researcher from Arizona State University: he believes that he has hit upon a practicable answer to the problem.

Writing in the journal Advanced Materials Interfaces, Konrad Rykaczewski and his colleagues have outlined how they might address the problem, but with a twist: the aircraft would de-ice whilst in flight...

If this sounds bizarre, a word of explanation may not go amiss. The system, which has been tested in a laboratory, relies on a sandwich of two skins. The first includes superhydrophobic coatings that will encourage freezing raindrops to bounce off the surface of the wing instead of forming as ice particles and adhering. In the event of this coating failing, there is a back-up system which releases anti-freeze to ensure that the wings stay ice-free.

And it all works.

According to the researcher, ice accumulation has been delayed by up to ten times longer on the samples used than on superhydrophobic or lubricant impregnated-surfaces in all the icing scenarios. Furthermore, researchers noted a similar time delay in ice accumulation during freezing rain when compared to surfaces flooded with antifreeze.

It might surprise readers to learn that the idea came from a poison dart frog that was sighted in Panama: the reptile releases toxin through its skin and this got Konrad thinking about other applications.

His vision would take the form of a twin layer (which can be as thin as paper) being sprayed on to the wings or upper surfaces of the aircraft. The first layer would be infused with the antifreeze whilst a second (top) layer would be exposed to the atmosphere and contain the superhydrophobic layer that is designed to repel rain droplets.

As the upper surface starts to freeze, so the pores fill up and thereby the ice makes contact with the anti-freeze below. Once that occurs, the process of diffusion begins and the ice melts. Where extended flights are envisioned, the aircraft might be equipped with some sort of pumping system.

As with all innovations, it's food for thought – but one day, it might become reality.

The US and Canada

The words "recession" and the "US" have been seemingly inseparable for a long time now. But is there any light at the end of the tunnel?



n 2013, there were 8.3m domestic and 1.4m international flights recorded in the US. Those are big numbers, by any standard. Looking at the broader picture, from 2009 to 2014, passenger traffic has grown, even if the graph line resembles the track of a cardiogram that is recording a feverish patient's struggle. All the indications are that passenger travel will continue to swell in the longer term, always allowing, of course, for unexpected hiccoughs along the way.

Bearing that in mind, it would seem that ground handling has a healthy future in the US. With every passing year we hear of more and more outsourcing of services as carriers seek to achieve greater profitability. Whilst on the face of it this is sensible progress, such moves have not always been beneficial to those on the ramp: some workers may not be absorbed by the new company and, rather more worryingly, wages with the new incumbent haven't always been on a par with the previous employer.

Thus the great imponderable continues, that of a low-paid workforce in a high profile industry sector. So how exactly has that sector performed over the last 12 months?

There has been change, that much is certain. The big difference at Air General, for example, has been that of a change



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Air General: a significant year

of leadership. Upon the retirement of Air General's President, Paula Dexter, in December last, the company announced the appointment of Patrick Maloney, grandson of the founder, Robert M Maloney.

Air General has grown from 337 staff in 2009 to its current total of 720 employees today. The new head firmly believes that his employees are his best resource and he adds that it is always a pleasure to receive accolades from customers about their dedication and service ethic.

To accommodate this rapid growth, the company has expanded the organisational structure to include three Regional Directors who look after a specific set of stations as well as functional areas for the whole company. This keen focus on all aspects of the cargo operation is what, he feels, gives customers the confidence that this company understands their business well, and has the expertise for both domestic and international cargo. Customer contracts are actually split, with about 50% of revenues coming from domestic freight and 50% from international freight.

It is commonly known that the staff at Air General are well looked after. Last year an Employee Assistance Programme was launched and a Leadership Development Programme was started for new managers, to provide them with access to courses in Management Skills as well as a personal mentor to guide them as they grow and develop into future leaders. A Memorial Scholarship was introduced in 2013 to honour the company's founder and the first US\$10,000 award was duly presented.

Also in 2014, the company announced the inauguration of its Passenger Handling Division, specifically with the introduction of a Meet and Greet programme for passengers. The success of this product, marketed to global travel agencies which specialise in passengers with additional travel requirements, rests upon employees who can offer the particular skills required to safely and efficiently guide passengers through the airport process with both discretion and professionalism.

After being awarded the IATA Dangerous Goods certification last year, the company added another level of training expertise to the Air General Training Academy repertoire. Training will be offered externally (for a fee) later on this year.

This past year has also marked many new business ventures, remarks Patrick, including the acquisition of a second facility in Denver to accommodate new contracts with Lufthansa, Icelandair, American Airlines and Alaska Air; the inauguration of new flights in Minneapolis with Condor Airlines; and Chicago with Air Lingus and West Jet, along with the successful certification of a CCSF in Houston for Crane Worldwide. In April, a sixth location was opened for JetBlue in Detroit. In addition to this, Air General was selected as the cargo handling agent for the opening of British Airways' newest station in the US, in Austin: that was also last April. This required the operation of a second cargo facility in Austin. United Airlines Cargo, JetBlue and Alaska Airlines cargo are also handled by Air General at this particular station.

October 20 marked the day when American Airlines and US Airways completed their long and difficult integration task and began operating under a single air waybill. For Air General, this also meant 16 new American Airlines contracts around the US. The partnership involved in Air General and American Airlines working together was a significant achievement for both companies. As a measure of this, the Air General cargo team in St Louis was recently awarded the prestigious American Airlines Cargo Cup for the third quarter, which was soon to be followed by the fourth guarter award to the Air General team in Charlotte.

Challenges part of the business

Expansion with Sun Country and Southwest Airlines helped round out the Air General experience last year.

"The challenges in this industry are many and varied," resumes Patrick. "Matching facilities to business volumes is difficult when the handling company must lease a property but ensure sufficient cargo volumes to cover the fixed costs. Airlines seek lower pricing but the cost of rent and utilities, salaries and supplies are ever-increasing. Different operating systems for various carriers requires a great deal of continual training and updating, while continued investment is necessary to remain educated and sharp and to continually adapt to new technologies. But as this team continues to grow and expand their services, their mission remains the same: to provide the highest guality service to customers."

Emerging from the crisis?

Alliance Ground international's Ross Jacobs, who is VP Business Development, says that in early 2014 there were cautious signs of the US emerging from a long stagnating economy.

"We experienced a surprisingly strong performance by our Asia-based clientele in both import and export air cargo during the first quarter that surprisingly followed through to the second and third quarters, with an even stronger fourth quarter that has continued into the first quarter of 2015.

"Alliance Ground International specialises in air cargo handling and the handling of wide body freighters, with a portfolio of 42 international and major US-based airlines. We provide full warehouse, import and export document handling, aircraft security, cargo screening and related operational services at nine gateway airports in the US. Our sister company, Cargo Force, provides services in an additional eight airports (including Luis Munoz Marin International) in support of the USPO/FE mail service. Cargo tonnage increased by approximately 15%, with a similar increase in freighter schedules. It would be naïve to put this down purely to growth in the US economy, as the now protracted labour issues at the US West coast ports have produced an increasingly significant transfer of just in time shipments from ocean to air. Past experience indicates that the trends from established logistics trade routes are difficult to change but once changed, even by a minimal amount, they result in a significant increase in air freight and freighter activity. Conversely, and certainly in the US, the confidence (or lack of) by the shippers in the US ports indicates a possible longer term move to air to ensure delivery to market.

"Specifically for AGI, with strong growth from existing customers and the addition of new customers, capital expenditure increased by a very significant US\$10m, with new freighter, ramp and warehouse handling equipment being added to support growth in Chicago, JFK and Los Angeles. AGI's newest station, that of Los Angeles, has achieved a consistently high service delivery rate and has received the Cargo Station of the Year award for 2014 from United Airlines.

"Further, 2014 saw the increasingly rapid addition of the B747-8F to our customers' freighter fleets and the very significant difficulties at major US airports (like Chicago, increasingly the freighter capital of the US) in being able to safely park and handle this latest generation of the 747. AGI has worked with customer airlines and airports to accommodate the 8F in areas originally constructed to park B747-200 series. The 8F is now a daily routine feature of freighter operations, with ramp crews accepting it as the new norm. Last year AGI became the first signed-up tenant in the new, long-awaited Chicago NE Cargo development site, which will relieve many of the current airport freighter parking and

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warehousing issues when its first phase opens in 2016.

"With the growth in the US economy and falling unemployment rates we have seen (for the first time in over six years) an increase in employee turnover. The increasing lead time and training costs in placing a new employee into the workforce has placed a strain on maintaining SLA commitments. Alliance Ground International increased its workforce in 2014 from 1,900 to 2,250 to meet growth. Labour rates for new hires increased in excess of US\$1 per hour at the entry level which, combined with retention increases, have added significantly to the cost of services in an industry where handling rates for both cargo and ramp remain at historically low levels.

"In summary AGI, as an independentlyowned and operated US-based company, continues to grow by strengthening its established airport operations and continuing to invest in its employees, organisational development and investment in equipment and facilities to meet its customers' long term needs."

An upward trend

DAL Global Services' Tom Farmakis, who is VP Marketing and Business Development, declares that last year was roughly on a par with 2013 although he notes that the market is rebounding somewhat.

"This is in terms of both passengers and cargo. Along with this, unemployment figures have gone down too, so there is more choice in the marketplace. Because of this we have had to realign our wage structure to make sure that it reflects the market situation.

"Personally, DALGS is doing well, wonderfully well, and we've been growing. We're handling about 1.2m flights a year so things are moving along. Investment in GSE hasn't really been an issue for us because we are still



Rebounding market for DAL Global Services

working our way through the surplus that goes back to pre-recession days. Working alongside Delta, we adhere to the carrier's green policy, so in terms of environmental progress, things are very positive.

"As for 2015, I see a continued growth trend albeit not a strong one – more a case of predictable growth, I feel."

Growth of 10% recorded

ATS says that it experienced 10% yearon-year growth, even after the American Airlines and US Airways merger, during which many of its operations were lost to their flying partners.

"We were fortunate to replace that lost business with some of the aggressive outsourcing that United Airlines has done in the United States and Canada," explains Ingrid Braeuninger, the company's Vice President, Sales and Business Development. "We have seen a growing trend for clients looking for total airport solutions to include both above the wing and below the wing services. Finally, ATS continues to have success in normal RFP activity in the market which contributed to our year-on-year success.

"Last year, we invested in over 300 pieces of ground support equipment, and of that total, we purchased 70% more environmentally-friendly equipment than the previous year."

She goes on to echo the words of DALGS, saying that the US national unemployment figure has dropped from 8% (in January 2013) to 5.7%, thereby making recruiting more difficult. "Recruiting the best and the brightest has become increasingly hard as the available workforce is shrinking and the rigour of the airport environment becomes more intense. As airlines have found more ways to shrink capacity. increase RASMs, decrease CASMs and improve the customer's perception of their product, so we have to continue to raise the bar for a qualified candidate. We are reassessing the labour market and how we create demand for employment with ATS in those job markets, constantly. What worked a year ago is not necessarily working today.

"ATS continues to invest in resources focused on the retention of staff through a variety of employee engagement opportunities. We have expanded our outreach to include social media, internal newsletters and town hall meetings. As one example, to gain deeper employee participation in our safety awareness campaign, we had a very successful contest with employees who produced safety videos to promote our "Take 2" programme. (The idea here is that of taking two minutes out to ensure you are prepared for a safe arrival). As importantly, we have found that safety messages made by our employees, for our employees, receive much greater feedback. All of the videos have been made available for continuous training at our stations."

She adds that ATS continues to be encouraged by the number of opportunities available in the marketplace. "With the recent mergers and acquisitions in the industry, there is strong support for the further rationalisation of business. It appears necessary for all ground service providers to evaluate their business model and realign strategies that focus on how best to grow business portfolios while managing the evolution of the market. Loss-making stations must clearly not be acceptable.

"There has been a significant trend in airlines opening up more full service opportunities to ground service providers. Furthermore, ATS has noticed growing popularity for airlines to release RFPs that involve bidding on numerous cities. ATS has had success with this process, picking up some large, multicity wins in 2014.

"In order for ground handlers to have long-lasting success, it is essential for airlines and ground service providers to work together to focus the industry on the same critical cornerstone elements. All of us have the same objectives; to provide valuable solutions to our customers. To do this, we must continue to evaluate ways to decrease and contain costs, while stimulating revenues. This must be accomplished without lowering quality standards and the safety of equipment and employees. We need to find better ways to cooperate as an industry so company goals are achievable. There are standard programmes in place to assist with this process, such as ISAGO. However, ATS is disappointed that the vision of this programme has not been realised. If the industry is truly committed to improving the quality and having leaner operating costs, the only way to achieve this is through rigorous collaboration with airlines and airports."



Rationalisation key to future, says ATS



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Stands and standards

Everyone is aware of the serious risks linked to taxi-way and runway incursions, but what about stand incursions? In this article Brenda Aremo-Anichini explores the issues revolving around this operational risk, which occurs daily at many airports.

et's begin by setting the scene. TWA (Teeny Weeny Airlines), a B747, arrives on stand A1, is chocked and the turnaround operational activities begin. Resembling a Formula One pitstop, the aircraft stand is a very busy place, with numerous operators at play. Fuel bowsers, catering highlift vehicles, high-lifts and beltloaders, potable water and toilet service trucks, ground or external power units, passenger steps, maintenance vehicles and others, all congregate to facilitate the turnaround within the assigned (typically limited) time. The race is on but not only for TWA.

At aircraft stand A2 we find a BLA (Better Luck Air) B777 parked and undergoing the same activities during its turnaround. With a similarly limited time on the ground and pressure to maintain schedule and observe its slot, its ramp service providers do all that is possible to ensure punctuality for the carrier.

As it happens, TWA and BLA are in contract with two different ground service providers, whose names will remain undisclosed. GSP One is contracted by TWA, whilst BLA contracts its services to GSP Two. For the purposes of this hypothetical example, both service providers use the 2013 version of the IATA SGHA. Moreover, both handling teams strive to adhere to their procedures and the airlines' precise time schedule. However, on occasions, GSP Two's operational staff have been observed cutting corners to avoid delays.

The problem

Cargo shipments destined for airline BLA were prepared slightly behind schedule and the operator towing the cargo takes a short cut from the service road, which is congested by slow-moving vehicles. He cuts through stand A1 to quickly deliver the cargo for prompt loading. In the rush the operator does not realise that the last of six cargo dollies is not properly hitched to the dollies in front. Driving close to the cowling of one of TWA's engines, to avoid the other vehicles busy servicing the aircraft, the driver carefully manoeuvres the train of cargo dollies (weighing nearly 35 tonnes) around all the other GSE.

Convinced that he has cleared all obstacles in stand A1, the tractor driver

continues his path to stand A2, where the BLA B777 awaits its load of cargo. Unbeknown to him, the last cargo dolly with two ULD containers has come free from the train and has veered into the engine cowling of TWA's B747, causing extensive damage. The aircraft is declared AOG.

Considerations and deliberations

TWA faces problems revolving around assessing the extent of the damage and its root causes, flight cancellations and, as time passes, spiralling costs to repair and return the aircraft to service. Most importantly, the business must continue and the airline must fulfill its contract with the passengers and cargo shippers, delivering them to a final destination.

In the meantime, BLA receives its cargo and the aircraft takes off with only a minimal delay and revenue loss, caused by the removal of the cargo ULDs that struck TWA's B747.

What is known in this case is where the problem may have originated. What is unknown is to which company the responsibility for the damage to the aircraft will be apportioned and what, if any, will be the limit of liability, given that GSP Two is not under contract with TWA. Therefore, there is no limit to the liability as specified in the IATA SGHA 2013, Article 8.

Does every stakeholder in this event have an implemented SMS? What is the *rôle* of the airport authority when it comes to ensuring safety compliance across the aerodrome? Is the airport authority exposed to a level of liability? Will a formal investigation be opened and, if so, who should lead it? Given the absence of a formal contract between TWA and GSP Two, will the airline safety investigators be permitted to conduct an enquiry and if so, will all records for maintenance, training and operating procedures be provided in a transparent, forthcoming way?

In all this there is a place for the insurance companies and loss adjusters to inspect the damage, assess the loss and decide on the settlement. How will the insurance companies come to conclude that the investigation will have reached its root causes?

In reality, some think ground operations are limited to the runway,

taxi-way and aircraft movement areas. In fact, many of the most critical aspects of ground operations are in the hands of the service provider and take place at the aircraft stand. This far, a reference for a stand incursion may not yet have been identified, but its effects may have significant safety, operational and financial impacts.

In the coming articles I will explore how these elements may have an impact on insurance, contracts, operational processes and procedures and established programmes/systems to actively assess and manage risks.



Brenda Aremo-Anichini Managing Director Twiga Aero. Contributions by Maurizio Anichini. Please share your comments on this article: Brenda.aremo@ twigaaero.com www.twigaaero.com Follow us on Twitter: @Twiga_Aero

PlaneBiz behind Queenstown lounge opening

Passengers travelling through Queenstown airport now have the option of relaxing, working or dining in a stylish new lounge, while waiting for their flights.

Representatives from Qantas, Jetstar, the aviation industry and local tourism businesses came together late in 2014 to toast the official opening of the Manaia Lounge. The lounge name actually derives from the Maori word for protector of land, sea and sky, and the facility will cater for up to 75 guests; it is located on the first floor of the terminal building with views out to the Remarkables mountain range, and is open from 7.30am to 4pm.

The lounge is open to Qantas platinum one, platinum and gold frequent flyers and Qantas club members travelling on a Qantas international or Jetstar international flight and to customers travelling in Business.

A pay as you go option is also offered to passengers travelling on any airline, domestic or international, with fees of \in 25 for up to three hours and \in 35 for three or more hours.

Streamlined processing for Auckland passengers

Air New Zealand recently started welcoming customers to the airline's brand new regional lounge at Auckland Domestic airport. The new space is located at the regional end of the terminal building, near the airline's Valet Parking drop-off point, and will offer facilities to customers travelling on regional services from Auckland (who are entitled to lounge access) a more streamlined journey through the airport.

Air New Zealand recently embarked on a significant lounge redevelopment programme and the Auckland regional lounge is the first of the new-look spaces to open to the public.

Barista-made coffee is also readily available in the lounge through Air New Zealand's mobile app, which allows customers to order coffee direct from their smartphone or tablet. The coffee ordering function was introduced earlier this year and has proven to be popular with customers. The lounge boasts Air New Zealand's distinctive look and feel and the design incorporates locally sourced products where possible.

MUNIUUUU 2

Air New Zealand's lounge redevelopment programme continues with the airline's Sydney International Lounge, which is due to be completed in the second quarter of 2015, while Auckland's International Lounge is currently scheduled to open in the middle of this year.

Air Canada renews with caterer

Caterer gategroup has renewed its agreement with Air Canada for domestic locations in Canada that are served by gategroup's Airline Solutions and Network and Product Solutions businesses. The award includes a three year extension of all catering and provisioning services provided by Gate Gourmet as well as the end-to-end solutions for distribution and product innovation provided by Pourshins Supplair. The renewal represents total revenue of more than CHF300m over the three year term of the agreement.

Help for the PRM

For handlers and airports mindful of the recent changes in legislation concerning

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It's all about connections

the rights of the PRM, Evac+Chair has a couple of cost-effective solutions.

The manufacturer currently offers two variations of the Air+Chair: the 1-150 AC, which is made without transfer boards and has smaller wheels, is basically the lightweight version and is slightly narrower than the 1-250 AC. This latter includes the transfer boards and has larger wheels, making it more suitable for heavier payloads.

Although the company manufactures chairs and aids for a variety of different markets, the aviation sector is significant. For example, one of the UK's leading airlines recently took delivery of over 200 Air+Chairs for its fleet of aircraft.

A standard was written by the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (the DPTAC) for the design of an onboard wheelchair and this was published in September 2007. Although this is not a British Standard, it will act as a guideline for any new onboard wheelchair designs coming to market. Evac+Chair designed to this standard, and currently meets around 90% of it which, it claims, is more than any other chair manufacturer in the marketplace.

New facility to open in April

Following on from the success of its award-winning Shongololo Lounge at Johannesburg's OR Tambo International airport, Menzies Aviation is to open a lounge that will be accessible by any passenger, including walk-ins, in April.

Visitors to the Sesfikile Premium Arrivals Lounge, adjacent to the SAA Arrivals Lounge at OR Tambo, will have access to private bathrooms and showers, food and drinks and complimentary highspeed wi-fi. The facilities are expected to be of particular benefit to business travellers who needed to do business on the day they arrive.

A lounge to Aspire to

Handler Swissport has announced the expansion of its award-winning global airport lounge portfolio. Three newly developed Aspire airport lounges are set to open over the coming weeks at key locations around the globe, further adding to the established network of Aspire Lounges throughout the UK and Europe.

The first to open its doors was the brand new Aspire Lounge at Amsterdam Schiphol in December 2014. Building on the success of the other Aspire Lounges within Swissport's portfolio, the new Dutch lounge benefits from contemporary design elements, comfortable surroundings, a great selection of food and beverages and an unrivalled view of the busy airfield. The bespoke, newly-built lounge is part of Schiphol's overall redevelopment of the international terminal, with Swissport being involved from the initial design stage, thereby ensuring a world class lounge is available to passengers departing from and transiting through the busy European hub.

In addition, the already successful Aspire Lounge in Helsinki is now undergoing an extension, which will see the lounge enlarged to 414 square metres, with an additional 50 seats, taking its overall capacity to 170 guests. The extension will also mean that the existing facility is refreshed, with an enlarged and enhanced food and beverage area offering a comprehensive range of snacks.

Furthermore, this expansion has culminated in the first Aspire Lounge to open in Africa, at Jomo Kenyatta International, Kenya, at the end of 2014. Located conveniently in the International Departure Terminal 1B, the lounge brings new levels of comfort and design in which passengers can relax, work or simply have a drink and something to eat before their flight. Guests will be able to choose from a wide range of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, healthy food and snacks and have access to complimentary wi-fi as well as international newspapers and magazines.

Renewals for gategroup in the US

Gategroup has announced renewed business with Delta Air Lines. The agreement reached with Delta covers contract extensions for airline catering and related services provided by gategroup's Airline Solutions business as well as extensions for global distribution services provided by its Product and Supply Chain Solutions business. In total, the renewal represents an average annual revenue of approximately CHF200m through 2018.

As an important step in the companies' long-time partnership, gategroup's Airline Solutions business and Delta have agreed to renew catering and provisioning services provided by Gate Gourmet, including those in Atlanta and Amsterdam. This agreement builds on the renewed and expanded business with Delta that gategroup announced in January 2014 provided by its Gate Gourmet and Gate Aviation brands and includes extensions for Gate Safe for ongoing provision of catering screening and security services at all US locations served by Gate Gourmet.

Additionally, gategroup and

Delta will be extending the services provided by PSCS brand Pourshins for Delta's global asset management and food distribution. Pourshins provides fully integrated end-to-end supply chain solutions, ranging from procurement, planning and forecasting to warehousing and regional and global distribution.

Budapest to benefit from Celebi

Celebi Ground Handling has opened two business lounges for premium airline cardholders and VIP travellers at Budapest's Ferenc Liszt International airport: these include a refurbished Celebi Platinum Lounge.

The \in 250,000 refurbishment will now see the Terminal 2B Lounge offer the same high level interior design and extra comfort as Celebi's additional VIP areas at Terminal 2A and the General Aviation Terminal. Located at the top of the transit area of Terminal 2B, it offers a view of the airport apron and quick access to all departing flights.

Last year, Celebi Ground Handling signed a five-year lease agreement with Budapest airport to provide lounge and ground handling services at the General Aviation Terminal. The building serves business jets and small private aircraft passengers.

In accordance with the agreement, the airport has refurbished the General Aviation Terminal, upgrading all daily operations areas including security, customs and border control. Celebi, in turn, has carried out a full interior redesign and upgrade of the lounge areas.

The refurbishments were marked with an open day that was attended by Celebi's Chairman Can Celebioglu and CEO Onno Boots, as well as the Ambassador of Turkey and Celebi's President Ground Handling and Cargo EMEA, Atilla Korkmazoglu.

Exclusive progress in Sydney

SkyTeam, the global airline alliance, has formally opened its new Exclusive Lounge at Sydney airport. The alliance's presence in the Australian market has been growing steadily and it now offers



SkyTeam's Exclusive Lounge: something to shout about

over 80 weekly departures from Sydney International that are operated by China Airlines, China Eastern, China Southern, Delta Air Lines, Garuda Indonesia, Korean Air and Vietnam Airlines.

The third exclusive lounge in SkyTeam's global network has been designed in accordance with SkyTeam's trademark sleek and modern style. It offers a luxurious and spacious environment in which to relax before a flight, with sweeping airport views and the iconic green botanical wall adding to the ambience. Key features and amenities include a seating capacity for up to 140 guests, connectivity and business amenities, complimentary refreshments and food together with a health centre and a dedicated television room.

Airspace and breathing space at San Diego International

San Diego International airport has opened its Airspace Lounge, which operators say is the airport's first and only common-use lounge. February 25 marked the launch of the facility which is operated by Swissport and is open to all airport passengers for a fee. Its operators say that American Express Platinum and Centurion card holders will receive complimentary access to the lounge, which has panoramic views of the airfield with comfortable seating areas, a full food and bar menu, together with shower facilities.

United announces a revamped customer experience

United Airlines recently announced that it would be transforming the customer experience in its United Clubs through the expedient of upgrades. This process will include an overhauled, complimentary food menu, which was launched in March, alongside extensive club renovations and a hospitalityfocused approach to customer service.

"We're making major changes in our United Clubs to give our customers the elevated, hospitality-centric service and experience they deserve and expect. This year will be transformational," explained Jimmy Samartzis, Vice President of Customer Experience. "Our new fresh, tasty and healthy food offerings, overhauled service approach, and systematic investment in renovating the

PRM, LOUNGE AND CATERING NEWS 27

rest of our 49 clubs worldwide will give our customers an airport getaway for relaxing or being productive during the hustle and bustle of their travel day."

Emirates appeal at Los Angeles International airport

Emirates has just celebrated the opening of its thirty-seventh dedicated lounge for First Class and Business Class customers, as well as Platinum and Gold members of Emirates Skywards, at Los Angeles International.

This new facility represents a US\$6.2m investment on the part of the airline to provide an experience of seamless luxury and comfort to its premium customers.

As the second largest airport in the US in the second largest metropolitan area in America, Los Angeles International offers Emirates' premium services even before customers step on board. The *décor* in the dedicated lounge provides a seamless transition to the elegant environment of the onboard First Class and Business Class offering, with a colour palette reflecting the neutral, earthy tones that customers have come to associate with the Emirates brand.

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A circular tour?

Rewriting the rule book is all part of the business of aviation, yet it happens very rarely. Here, we take a look at a concept that might, just might, become reality one day.

irports are airports and runways are runways, right? Well, yes – except when the airport in question is surrounded by its runway. If this sounds an odd statement to make, then let me take you back to the turn of the last century, to just after the First World War. An article published in *Popular Science* back then looked at the idea of a circular runway, one that in effect would have no beginning and indeed, no end.

A fascinating idea, I think you'll agree, but hardly one that would be practical. Or would it? One of the ideas put forward was that of the runway perched up high, linking to skyscrapers, suspended, as it were, in mid-air. If this sounds the stuff of fantasy, then let's return to *terra firma* and talk about the merits of a circular runway enclosing the terminal. That, at least, could be achieved... couldn't it?

Fast forward almost a century and we fetch up with the National Aerospace Laboratory (NLR), an Amsterdambased independent research enterprise that specialises in addressing the requirements of the aerospace sector in all its shapes and forms. A recent, 18 month project, which terminated in 2014, saw it assess and explore an intriguingly titled project, that of the Endless Runway.

Back to the future?

So why look at this particular angle? NLR is mindful of the lack of capacity at airports and cites as the major constraint to growth in air transport today. Current technology projects optimise the use of the available airport capacity, but it believes that unless a structurally new approach is followed. then the anticipated three-fold increase in air traffic may not ever be a realistic achievement. There are many factors to consider in this context: physical constraints on runway operations, including wake vortex separation minima as well as cross- and tailwind limits, are making it difficult to improve further on the current performance of conventional airport configurations. And readers will all know of the ongoing debates raging over whether this or that airport should be building another runway.

The Endless Runway project, says NLR, has thus been a radical and novel airport concept, which applies the idea of a complete, circular runway. The development of the Endless Runway can, NLR believes, establish a breakthrough in sustainable airport capacity by neatly avoiding the physical constraints of conventional runways through the simple shifting of the lift-off and touchdown points of individual aircraft.

The main feature (and indeed, a potential key selling point) of the circular runway is that it will become possible to let an aircraft both land and take off with a headwind in evidence. Whatever its strength and direction, the Endless Runway becomes independent of this wind. When allowing a limited crosswind, though, an airspace user can shorten the global trajectory of the flight through an optimised departure and arrival route.

Written like this, the idea begins to seem attractive, it has to be admitted. Critical to the concept is that runway, of course: NLR reckons that a runway, whose diameter is set at three kilometres, should prove large enough to provide sufficient room for the infrastructure, which would preferably be contained inside the circle; indeed, that radius could even possibly accommodate a hub airport. This has the effect of making the airport compact, while allowing current day aircraft to use the circle without significant structural modification.

The mechanics

Operating the endless runway, NLR feels, should not prove to be a difficulty; after all, the landing and take-off procedures are freed up of all the normal caveats that apply when windy or changeable wind conditions are experienced. The runway, by its nature, is multi-directional and so two or more runways are not required. Helpfully, both take-off and landing can be executed from any direction. In a strong wind event, aircraft will fly in sequence towards the Endless Runway to allow for landing at the touchdown point where dependency on the wind is at a minimum. This is no different from current practice, with the exception that an optimal touchdown point always exists, whereas for a conventional runway, a certain crosswind will need to be factored into the equation. In this manner the Endless Runway can attain a sustainable maximum capacity under every wind condition and with every



Could this be the airport of the future? Design has much to recommend it

wind direction.

In low wind conditions, no meteorological restrictions exist for the aircraft landing direction: this enables the possibility of shorter landing intervals.

Finally, where changing winds are encountered, the aircraft sequence can gradually move according to the wind direction. No break in the sequence occurs, which is the case with conventional runway configurations. No costly operations for tactical runway changes or changing runway directions during operations are considered to be necessary, either.

The findings

The study completed, NLR reports that the outcome and reaction have been most positive. It has established that a circular runway concept is rather more than conceptual: the idea has answered the questions posed and is, in fact, eminently practicable. That initial journal article, back in 1919, was clearly on to something.





Is cargo the next Kodak?

More than one speaker at the recent IATA cargo symposium likened the freight sector to Kodak, the US company that famously failed to grasp the benefits of the digital age. Felicity Stredder reports from China.

n March this year, the International Air Transport Association hosted the 9th World Cargo Symposium in Shanghai, China. In light of the challenges posed by the current state of affairs in the industry – the desperate need for modernisation, digitalisation and a revolution of sorts – the aim of the week was to shine a light on the current trends and potential areas for improvement in the hope of bringing the industry up to speed with the modern age and making it a stable, profitable business once more.

As is no secret to any member of the cargo club, the airfreight market has seen negligible growth since 2008. "Air cargo has had a challenging few years," IATA's Director General and CEO, Tony Tyler, explains during the opening plenary on March 10. "2014 saw the first significant boost in volumes since 2010, a trend we expect to continue this year. Revenues, however, are still down from the 2011 peak, and yields are falling for the fourth straight year."

Despite a promising 4.5% increase in global FTKs last year, cargo revenues remain US\$5m below their 2011 peak, and the longevity of this recession has been an unprecedented struggle for industry partners. There is a long road to recovery and recapturing these lost revenues, yet Tony remains optimistic in his outlook, asserting that, "the prospects for the future are bright because the industry is really starting to act strategically and plan for the future." Happily, this can-do, constructive attitude seemed to be the general demeanour of all symposium attendees. The industry has reached somewhat of a crisis point and change is in the air (as well as cargo, of course).

Specialised tracks

Proceedings took the format of no fewer than 21 specialised tracks, with each meeting addressing a separate area in need of scrutiny. On the agenda were tracks devoted to e-cargo, dangerous goods and security, amongst a plethora of other subjects. The industry trends track was particularly relevant to the theme of the symposium, which was identified as "improving the customer experience" during the opening plenary. In this particular seminar, IATA's Manager of Cargo Industry Management, Celine Hourcade, disclosed the results of their shipper survey, conducted on 336 participants in January, which revealed a total of 74% of customers were "satisfied" with their air cargo experience. The top reasons selected



Tony Tyler: high hopes for the future of the industry, despite the doomsayers

as the main advantages of air cargo over other modes were speed - the most common choice, with 33% of the votes - and reliability. In spite of this seemingly encouraging result, a panel dedicated to the shipper's voice stressed the urgent need for supply chain optimisation, to increase the value proposition, and deplored an array of the service's shortcomings. Panel member Jason Frerich, Director Logistics Infrastructure at Nike, commented on the low visibility of the process, asserting: "Things move a little faster with air cargo, as they're supposed to, but we don't always get the updates as timely as we would like. We almost seem to get better information from the ocean carriers than we do with the air carriers." In addition to the need for greater transparency – a prominent issue which received attention at a number of the tracks - Jason cited environmental performance transparency as another necessary development for the air carriers. In light of current greener inclinations, Nike, both for itself and for its own customers, requires access to calculations regarding carbon footprint if it is to achieve its aim of a 27% reduction in CO₂. It comes as no surprise to anybody that CO₂ emissions are under much greater scrutiny than ever before and if companies are to become more environmentally conscious, they require access to the relevant data.

Environmental concerns were deemed to be one of a host of mega trends in the industry that has resulted in greater competition between companies. Leif

Rasmussen, President and CEO of SAS Air Cargo Group, also specified business globalisation, advancing technology and tightening security as additional trends that have not only threatened profitability, but complicated business operations and made understanding the customer's needs more complex. He suggests the only solution to combat these challenges is "true innovation, not small, incremental improvements... I'm talking about game-changers." Indeed this concept of total transformation became somewhat pivotal to the week's discussions; everything seemed to boomerang back to this dire need for innovation.

In accordance with this notion of innovation as the major driver in transforming the industry, Leif went on to reference two very relevant business entities with two very different stories: Apple and Kodak. While Steve Jobs and Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak embraced innovation and the opportunity to do something differently, Kodak famously neglected such opportunities to its own peril. Legend has it that an engineer from Kodak actually invented digital photography but Kodak management neglected to see the full potential of this business venture, which ultimately caused the demise of the film-based photography business. The question, according to Leif, therefore, was: will air cargo become a Kodak or an Apple? Will the industry stagnate or will it innovate? Opinion of conference-goers seemed to be unanimous: there is really only one option if business is to thrive.

Fresh ideas

Nowhere was this concept of modernisation more prevalent than at the 4th annual Future Air Cargo Executives Summit (FACES), held a day prior to the official opening of the conference. This year's symposium placed considerable onus on youth and the young generation in driving the industry out of the rut in which it has been stagnating for some years. To this end, a specialised meeting was organised, inviting the new faces in the industry to come together and collaborate with some of the more established names in the sector to identify and address the greatest

challenges the industry faces today. According to a recent cargo executive summit survey, the number one issue is considered to be the need for future leaders; the concern being the industry's lack of allure when it comes to attracting (and retaining) future innovators and talent. There is a lot of competition from other "sexier" industries – a term that was in frequent use at the conference – that are enticing the future leaders of the global economy away from the air cargo industry.

The topic of contention in the FACE meeting, therefore, was exactly how companies can instil a sense of urgency about this crisis and how they can attract newcomers into the business. A great deal of emphasis was placed on mentoring the next generation and generating awareness about the industry in education establishments. Sebastiaan Scholte, CEO of Jan de Rijk Logistics, for example, makes it his responsibility to attend universities, giving lectures and presentations, scouting for talent and offering internships accordingly. Not enough industry players make a conscious effort

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to create awareness of the industry and there is unanimous agreement that more needs to be done to advertise the existence of this relatively unknown area of business. The fact of the matter is, a career in air cargo is not highly sought after like a career in medicine and yet in many ways it is just as important. Air carriers and other cargo agents have been hugely instrumental in the fight against Ebola and ensuring vital medicines get from A to B - it's not just an industry, it's a global infrastructure. And it's safe to say that without it, the domino effect would be far-reaching and fairly catastrophic, not to put too fine a point on it.

Needless to say, there seemed to be a firm feeling at the conference that young minds and fresh talent are the answer to many of the industry's problems and the appropriate driving force in modernising a host of antiguated ideas. Indeed, Oliver Evans, Chief Cargo Officer for Swiss International Airlines, says of the matter: "We need the youth to challenge any and every process that doesn't work." To be unco-operative to change is to become complacent, which is to risk total irrelevance in a society as rapidly evolving as ours. Complacency, such as that infamously demonstrated by Kodak, could prove fatal to the industry.

Glyn Hughes, IATA Global Head of Cargo, summarised the urgency of the necessary transformation, saying: "There are so many human, social and economic benefits derived from air cargo, and therefore we need as an industry to be innovative and to show leadership to actually progressively change as the world around us changes... the pace of change is accelerating on a daily basis." Embracing change, and modern technology, is paramount to progression and so, too, is encouraging young people, as the pioneers of said technology, into the air cargo arena.

Despite living in the digital century, air cargo still operates using procedures



One of IATA's key objectives: "We're there to support and facilitate innovation and change," says Glyn Hughes



Leif Rasmussen references Kodak's demise, stressing the need for game-changing strategies within the cargo sector

from the analogue age and is still awaiting a full transition from paper to electronic processes, such as the e-air waybill. Enthusiasm for the e-freight initiative has been abundant but sadly practical implementation has been minimal. In this respect 2014 was a breakthrough year: airlines, freight forwarders, shippers, handling agents and customs authorities all collaborated to achieve three times the implementation of the e-AWB than was seen a year before; however, there is still a way to go to reach the target 45% adoption of e-AWB by the end of 2015. While the FACE summit may not be able to resolve issues such as these in the course of a meeting, they can get things moving in the right direction. This is precisely how the 4th annual assembly culminated: speaker Joost van Doesburg, Air Freight Policy Manager at the European Shippers' Council, proposed that the attendees of the meeting collaborate on a white paper that will essentially establish a plan of action to rescue the industry from its current shortcomings, stating the areas that need improving and how the relative improvements might be made.

Time is money

One of the greatest pending improvements to operations is the aim to remove 48 hours from the supply chain by 2020. Timing is critical in the airfreight business and was certainly a high priority on all the agendas at the conference. The cargo operations and handling track invited a panel of executives to discuss the glaring incongruity between the costs of transporting by air and its relative speed compared to other modes of shipping - it may be ten times more expensive but it certainly isn't ten times guicker. Currently the sums just don't add up, but according to Mike Morey, Director Cargo Operations for Air Canada, there is a solution to the equation: the Master Operating Plan. This document, which provides the air cargo supply chain with an industry-endorsed, standard description of the end-to-end process of transporting cargo by air, can help determine problem areas, which can subsequently be tackled. Mike explained: "There are many time-wasting elements to our business. Mapping it against the MOP gives you a perfectly clear picture and enables you to identify areas to cut down on time." David Ambridge, Director Cargo Operations, WFS, strongly agreed, adding the MOP's potential for developing industry standards and optimum practices to its list of merits. In his words, the MOP is "about bringing standardisation and simplification to the industry." Not only can the MOP serve as the standard against which we measure operation and illuminate areas of inefficiency, it also facilitates business dialogue with regulators and other partners in the supply chain. With this notion of standardisation in mind, David went on to advocate the IATA Ground Operations Manual, asserting: "IGOM is crucial to the future of this industry, both on the ramp and in the terminals. If we truly want to take 48 hours out of the business let's get simple, let's get standard and let's do everything the same way as much as we possibly can." This is the best way to ensure quality goes up and damage and costs go down.

Last orders

During the course of the conference, the need for greater transparency in



Floris Kleijn, CHEP, wins Innovation Award for ULD tracking concept, CanTrack. (Left to right): Glyn Hughes, Des Vertannes (SmartKargo), Floris Kleijn and IATA's Tom Windmuller

all aspects of the shipping process, improvements to speed, reliability, quality and an array of other disciplines were distinguished as universal problems in need of speedy resolutions. As for the way to achieve these resolutions, common themes included procedural standardisation, data-sharing platforms and, perhaps most prevalent of all, modernisation and innovation. In line with this latter notion, IATA concluded the 9th Annual World Cargo Symposium by premiering the Air Cargo Innovation Award, with the purpose of fostering innovative spirit, which they intend to present every two years thereafter at future symposiums. Three contenders were shortlisted from an original 25 to win US\$20,000 prize money for their technological innovations, developed to enhance the customer experience. In a public vote by WCS delegates, Floris Kleijn, IT Director and Project Leader at CHEP Aerospace Solutions, was pronounced the winner for his CanTrack idea to utilise solar energy to power ULD smart tracking and tracing tools. Runners-up CLIVE, the operations management software, and CargoHub, with their hassle free claims application CargoClaims, won US\$8,000 each.

Incentives important

Funding and rewarding revolutionary ideas in this way is undoubtedly a step in the right direction for the air cargo industry. A proactive approach such as this is necessary to reverse the downward economic trend and reinstate profitability and prosperity where currently resides uncertainty. Perhaps, as general opinion seems to be, the fresh perspective of the younger generation is precisely what the industry needs to propel it out of a rut and into the modern age, but there is no one solution to the alut of common problems. I leave the final words, therefore, to Glyn and his closing summation of the current situation.

"The industry must embrace digital information that can be exchanged in a transparent manner, renew its focus on quality within the supply chain, and its speed has to be increased. The challenge laid down to cut 48 hours out of the average shipping time is more relevant than ever. The whole air cargo supply chain must be dedicated to moving things faster. Now we need to get this done."

Aptly, then, the final notion is one of drive and determination. Changes have so far led to improvement incrementally; the new aim is for change to occur exponentially. Only time will tell if these objectives come to fruition...



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particular requirements. According to IATA, its ISAGO tool is being revamped – so how will that affect the handler? Collaborative Decision Making is another hot topic and this, together with the part played by today's Procurement and Operational departments, will be put under the microscope.

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www.groundhandling.com/annual


Ready for the ramp?

In this article, we take a look at what's available to those who need to train tomorrow's handlers for working on the ramp.

s the ramp still the most dangerous working environment? The building sector used to be plagued with accidents but it has improved its standing in recent times. In a like manner, ramp casualties are seemingly fewer these days. Some of that must surely be down to the protocols and training aids that have been developed over the last decade.

Whilst it's all about safety, that word is not always fully understood. Indeed, it could be said to be little more than a handy noun for those whose job it is to make the workplace safer for employees. Certainly, some aspects of safety may even have been forgotten...

The forgotten part of safety, according to Ian Bell of the AAGSC, is that of Process Safety.

"If you don't understand the term Process Safety or think that it applies to just hazardous facilities, then think again. Airports are hazardous environments so Process Safety has a place beside Personal Safety in the whole safety equation.

"Let me start be explaining the difference between Process Safety and Personal Safety. Personal Safety refers to our focus on safety initiatives and controls relating to people. We induct people, we train them, we monitor them, we give them personal protective equipment such as hearing protection, we set rules and monitor them and want people to behave in a certain way to preserve their own safety and the safety of others. We want people to be safe! Most of the advertising campaigns by regulators focus on working safely and speaking up.

"By contrast, Process Safety refers to how we manage the integrity of the equipment and processes such as maintenance to prevent incidents. This encompasses the design of equipment, the inbuilt safeguards such as interlock systems that will only allow the equipment to be used when certain conditions have been met, the maintenance of these systems and processes to ensure they are reliable and effective. As we use equipment more, the way in which we design, inspect, maintain and use this equipment needs a far higher profile.

"Process Safety is a concept that is largely foreign to airports yet its effects can be felt every day because we rely on equipment to do much of the work for us and we have continued to design the equipment to meet standards of consistency that we often cannot achieve with people. People forget: they will find a work-around or a shortcut to get things done. These may void safety processes.

"Does it really matter that we often

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don't know the difference between Process Safety and Personal Safety controls? Absolutely!

"Process Safety controls tend to be the ones at the top of the hierarchy of control (Figure 1). They tend to be more robust and reliable so we try to use these controls in preference to relying on training and PPE, as people's behaviour can affect the degree to which these work. However, if they were to fail, the consequences could be more severe.

"Let's put this into perspective. You drove to work today; I suspect that at no point in the drive did you have to consider the integrity of the brakes or whether the ABS system would work if required. This is Process Safety at work. You had faith that they would because these components are designed to work when called upon and they are reliable BUT if they didn't work, the consequences could be catastrophic.

"Neither Process Safety nor Personal Safety can be viewed in isolation of the other. On the apron, people interact with the equipment, including aircraft; equipment is inspected and maintained by people, so training is still a vital part of the whole safety equation but it is also vital that we all understand the *rôle* that each plays and the different failure rates that each has – and yes, even every component within a vehicle has a different failure rate, which then sets the expected life and the inspection regime imposed by the manufacturer or suppliers.

"Adopting one aspect of Process Safety, the Australasian Aviation Ground Safety Council (www.AAGSC.org) has introduced a process called The Circle of Safety, which requires equipment that abuts an aircraft to do a brake test at 5 metres from the aircraft and reduce speed; then another brake test at 2 metres from the aircraft to reduce speed further. The vehicle is then marshalled against the aircraft."

(A simple expedient, and one that really ought to have a wide application on ramps all over the world, one feels. – Ed)

Simulation tools for the ramp

Without a shadow of a doubt, we live in an age in which safety and planning take the front seat. Caution is not merely a byword – it is becoming a way of life. Nowhere is this better illustrated, perhaps, than in the aviation sector. Consider the fact that a pilot goes through 18 months of training before being allowed to take to the skies. On the ground, it's arguably a little easier. Certainly, if you are involved in the emergency services at an airport, then you'll almost certainly have had



Fig 1 Hierarchy of Controls

experience of simulators to enhance and refine your skills in dealing with the unexpected.

Firefighters, response teams and medical services apart, it's the handler who is now standing to benefit from the advances in IT. Or more precisely, sitting - for we are in the age of the mockup, a screen, chair and set of controls that mimics the real-life environment of someone in a de-icing rig or perhaps driving a refueller airside. Ramp driving simulation has come of age: the graphics and the realism get better every year and there are plenty of enterprises willing to rent out these facilities. There are some companies who have invested in this technology themselves to hone the skills of their workforce to the highest possible pitch.

And what is the result? A safer working environment should be the answer.

Some solutions

De-icing is a complicated task, which is why a de-icing simulator is deemed a useful investment. Vestergaard's Elephant Beta simulators have been put to very good use in this winter season, says the Danish company. In December 2014 Vestergaard delivered a total of 11 Elephant Betas to American Airlines at JFK: thanks to this purchase, American Airlines in JFK was able to completely replace its current 25 year old de-icers.

As the delivery of the de-icers occurred whilst the de-icing



Fig 2 Circle of Safety

season operation was underway, all the operators were extremely busy, necessitating a smooth transition to the new equipment.

To facilitate the commissioning of the trucks and assist the operators in understanding the new technology, Vestergaard delivered the Elephant Beta simulator prior to the delivery of the new Elephant Beta de-icing trucks. Using the simulator for training, the operators were able to become proficient in the equipment before the real thing turned up at the airport.

By the time the de-icers were delivered, the operators had been trained using the simulator and had become very adept at using the new technologies contained within the latest Vestergaard equipment. Interesting to note, the company says that its trainers are sold all year round, and not just in the winter season; to date, around 20 units have been sold.

A quiet year

For its part, Adacel reports that it has not made any significant changes to its airside driver simulation product in the past year. The company says that interest in airport driver training remains fairly consistent and that it is currently in the negotiation stage concerning several potential contracts. The biggest issues potential clients seem to face, it believes, are those of funding and having the personnel to operate such simulator systems.

The broader view

We can, of course, move on from a single driver experience to something that is more encompassing and which can present an overview, in a simulated format, of the airport and the ramp. One such purveyor of this type of simulation technology is the Airport Research Centre, in Germany.

A typical example of its work can be seen in the DHL CAST* vehicle airside simulation project in Leipzig. DHL recently established a new air cargo distribution centre at the airport, which now serves as the European DHL hub. The distribution centre consists of a sorting centre, a DHL apron, a hangar and an administration building.

The major goal of DHL is that of ensuring punctual and cost-efficient doorto-door transportation of all shipments. The hub in Leipzig plays a fundamental *rôle* within the process chain. Therefore, all processes at the hub must be performed reliably. Consequently, the assignment of personnel and equipment has to be optimised to operate in a cost-

SAFETY AND SIMULATION 37

effective way.

To validate DHL's operational plan and resource planning, the Airport Research Centre investigated the airside processes at the DHL hub by means of simulation with CAST Vehicle and CAST Aircraft applications.

The simulations comprise the vehicle traffic and processes on the DHL apron as well as the ULD processes within the sorting centre. To achieve this, the interface between airside and landside had to be completely modelled. The transport of unit load devices from the aircraft to the sorting centre, and *vice versa*, has been at the very heart of the vehicle traffic at this hub.

Turning to the main objectives of the simulations, these have included determining the optimum number of tugs, trailers, highloaders and pushback tractors that would be required to achieve a reliable and punctual operation at the hub. Moreover, there was the possibility of analysing the utilisation of the sorting centre in order to provide adequate in- and output capacities. Finally, detection of bottlenecks in the infrastructure was achieved, allowing an optimisation of



Visualisation of process is the key...



.. as seen here in client solution

the utilisation of the infrastructure.

The project initially advanced through data collection in co-operation with DHL. There followed the development of a simulation model for CAST Vehicle/ CAST Aircraft, including the airside– landside interface. Thereafter followed an analysis of the simulation results and a 3-D visualisation of airside processes. A comprehensive presentation of the project boundary conditions, process definitions and the results followed in due course.

So what were the advantages?

The Airport Research Centre was able to provide a detailed analysis and quantification of the relevant key peformance indicators for DHL. Thanks to the visualisation, operators have been better able to understand traffic flows at the hub as well as interdependencies. Added to this is the reality of future proof planning (in other words, data for future development steps), as well as the acceleration of decision processes.

On behalf of DHL, Matthias Kiesel had this to say:

"It has been a successful collaboration and our project targets have been met in full. The project has shown us, in many places, important details about our own processes and limitations. After the project we were given the possibility of evaluating the possible causes of the problems we encountered. Even if you cannot respond to all the critical points, there exists the knowledge base for the processing of dependencies, with which you can solve any problems for a long period afterwards."



Meeting in Macau

The bustling backdrop of Macau provided the venue for this year's Asian conference.

t's probably safe to say that the aviation sector isn't progressing as fast as Macau: now home to a number of huge hotels, with more on the way, the island has been transformed in just five or six years. Coincidentally, transformation was also on the agenda of this year's GHI conference.

Dnata Singapore's Mark Edwards delivered a paper focussed on the handling opportunities that existed in Asia and he spent time highlighting the extraordinary growth that the region was evincing.

With a 2014 seat capacity of 1.6bn and 8% year-on-on-year growth over the last decade, Asia's strides were impressive. The focus, he felt, was shifting eastwards with China, a major contributor; indeed, everything was pointing to Asia overtaking Europe and the US in numbers of airports by 2016. In a like manner, Asia's fleet size forecast infers that it will be far ahead of the rest of the world by 2023. Why has all this happened? Part of the reason has been that of the swelling GDP, which has been rising by 4.8% and this, in turn, has led analysts to predict that by 2033, 48% of global traffic will be to and from Asia.

Mark touched on the growth of the low cost model in the area and emphasised

for those looking to handle that the region was complex and diverse in its requirements. Independent handling was currently fragmented, with Swissport leading the pack with a 6% market share. To be successful, efficiency was paramount although any successful operation there would be relying, ideally, on a beefed up infrastructure.

Another ground handler at Changi, that of SATS, led on from Mark: Yacoob Piperdi moved the spotlight on to the need for the handler to work efficiently with its landlord. A sound relationship, he stressed, was vital if the partnership was to work and Yacoob briefed the audience on SATS' progress since its inception back in 1972. As ever, the statistics spoke for themselves: in 1981 Changi handled 8m passengers whereas today that number is over six-fold. By 2025 Changi East will have been completed, bringing capacity to a staggering 135m.

Yacoob explained the triangle of stakeholders at the airport (which includes the airport operator and the aviation authority) and went on to discuss the reasons for the success that Changi has enjoyed. A loyal workforce, high service quality, productivity and connectivity have all played their part in this station's expansion. There have been challenges, of course: rising fuel prices, depressed yields, handler costs increasing and greater passenger expectation, together with more low cost carrier operations, have all brought pressure to bear on the operating model. A shrinking workforce and more and more construction work in Singapore hasn't helped matters, either, especially when 50% of SATS' expenditure goes on labour.

Hints for a prosperous future? Yacoob mentioned information sharing as well as the sharing of data, along with joint committees and incentive programmes.

BST's Teg Matthews brought to the audience's attention a common thread that was woven throughout the 2015 event: that of safety. What exactly, he asked, was required to create a safety culture – and did you drive it?

The age-old conundrum, that of operating in an environment of decreasing margins amid rising costs and in a safe manner, seemed as remote as ever to some. Teg pointed out to the audience that it was important not to interpret but to understand the differences between compliance and commitment in day-today work. If a culture is to be instilled,



Barry Nassberg, Justin Jaques WFS, Stewart Sinclair BFS, Shraga Richter ELAL ISRAEL AIRLINES and Martin Meyer WFS



Taro Kojima JAPAN AIRLINES, Raymond Lo, Jeremy Stafford and Alistair Reid MENZIES AVIATION, Hiroshi Ueno and Katsuaki Yamada JAPAN AIRLINES, Sharon Hsu MENZIES AVIATION, Kumiko Nagasawa and Shinsaku Yasumitsu JAPAN AIRLINES and Stuart Key MENZIES AVIATION



Yousif Al Hammadi DHABIJET, Lee Coon JBT AEROTECH, Richard Blackhouse DHABIJET and Gary Bennett JBT AEROTECH



Leo Chan ON FORTUNE ENGINEERING SERVICES, Raymond Lo and Alan Tong MENZIES AVIATION and Alex Lam TLD



Siew Kit Lee SATS, Karmjit Singh NIIT TECHNOLOGIES, Sarabjot Singh Uberoi AIR INDIA and Onno Boots CELEBI



Ping Choi Chung CEBU PACIFIC AIR, Jaeyoun Paik and Soon Suk Paik SHARP AVIATION, Lissa Anareta CEBU PACIFIC AIR, Sang Sun Yi and J B Do SHARP AVIATION, Roberto Jose Jimenez and Carmila Uy CEBU PACIFIC AIR, Samok Cho SHARP AVIATION and Frank Paulus S-P-S



Benny Chan HONG KONG AVIATION GROUND SERVICES, Dilys Ng and Julia Suen HONG KONG AIRLINES and Dino Lui JARDINE AVIATION SERVICES



Daniel Soh and Bala Palani TIGERAIR, Rakesh Jain INDO THAI AIRPORT MANAGEMENT SERVICES and Yun Meng Chew TIGERAIR

APRIL 2015 GROUND HANDLING INTERNATIONAL

then leaders have to talk about this vision daily and recognise any variation from the norm. The measurement of climate, culture and safety leadership were, he maintained, ongoing tasks and whilst short term change may well occur after an incident, unless it is cemented, reversion will develop.

Allied to this was the willingness to talk about situations and the requirement to stop doing things that could contribute to a poor organisational culture and a



Martin Vestergaard POWER STOW, Tjutjuk Septiadi PT JTI MANDIRI, Paul Bruton and John Boult DAMAREL SYSTEMS and Andi Triatmoko PT JTI MANDIRI



The question and answer session threw up some interesting comments, with SATS being asked what it had done to lower unit costs and whether dnata differentiates between low cost carriers and regular fare airlines. The subject of the third licence at Changi was raised and there was a query on how handlers in the region would cope

in the face of lower labour levels.

Following this was the interactive safety panel session in which Cathay Pacific, the Hong Kong Airport Authority and Menzies Macau were all represented. An interesting topic to emerge was that of a survey that had been conducted by Cathay Pacific on loadsheet procedures. In all, 16 airlines had been approached with a view to finding out the extent of errors in weight and balance sheets and at which point any flaws were detected. Answers ranged



Benson Tan SCOOT, Intiya Forrest NOKSCOOT, Toralf Sonntag and David Krakowski SWISSPORT, Soo Huan Lau NOKSCOOT, Hyung Hoon Kim SWISSPORT, Qingwei Lim and Adrian Ng SCOOT



Mario Bufo and Gashaw Ayalew UNITED AIRLINES, Carlos Sanchez Árellano and Swen Michel FRAPORT and Don Kaminski UNITED AIRLINES



SERVICES, Fatma Sancakli and Zekeriya Savran TURKISH AIRLINES CARGO. Ben Tan BEIJING AVIATION GROUND SERVICES and Omer Faruk Bayram TURKISH AIRLINES CARGO



Mohammed Abdullah Al Hasan BIMAN BANGLADESH AIRLINES, Jean Pierre Nathan MILOCO GSE and Mohammad Tafazzal Hossain Akanda BIMAN BANGLADESH AIRI INFS



Mike Garland AMERICAN AIRLINES, Marcus

Ma and Ajesh Kurakkaran AIR INDIA SATS AIRPORT SERVICES.Todd Rice and Russ

Fortson AMERICAN AIRLINES

Dorte Kruger Molin POWER STOW, Adel Fouad Abd El Salam EGYPTAIR GROUND SERVICES and Martin Vestergaard POWER STOW



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0 EIGHTH ASIAN GHI CONFERENCE

from low to high in terms of frequency but it was admitted that catastrophes only occurred when a series of faults took place. It further transpired that 92% of the carriers surveyed were tracking loadsheet errors.

To its credit, Cathay has come up with a Loadsheet Integrity Index which comprises an eight point checklist. This effectively covers all the procedures and IATA is now participating in an enlarged survey of this type. Those airline representatives present were also invited to participate.

Cathay's conclusions were interesting: whilst every airline tackled the process in a different way, a documented system was shown to be advisable – and a reduction in human error was virtually guaranteed.

Audience participation in this session was good, with plenty of discussion on behaviour, ramp equipment standardisation and commonality as well as the high workforce attrition rate within the sector. Was the industry learning from its mistakes? Cathay's Peter Hunt, for one, felt not, arguing that more sharing



Michael Narvaez PAIRCARGO, Johnny David PHILIPPINE AIRPORT GROUND SUPPORT SOLUTIONS, Thomas Kramer and Peter Potthast GOLDHOFER - SCHOPF



Toralf Sonntag, Hyung Hoon Kim and Tom Stevenson SWISSPORT, Holger Bremes, Joerg Neunmann and Ute Irman Emmel LUFTHANSA GERMAN AIRLINES



Ajesh Kurakkaran and Marcus Ma AIR INDIA SATS AIRPORT SERVICES, Xing (Tom) Xin BEIJING AVIATION GROUND SERVICES, Rudi Kandhai KLM, Ben Tan BEIJING AVIATION GROUND SERVICES



Daniel Lim BBA AVIATION, David Barker and Randy Ruggieri ASIG

of experience was required, although TW Yeung stressed that his airport was indeed sharing data. Disincentivisation was rampant: handlers struggled to turn aircraft on time then watched helplessly as these same aircraft were held up in queues whilst taxi-ing, for example. Then there were PDA and printed paper problems: the time of day could affect the reading of either format. And what about skilled labour could the airport take steps to ensure levels were higher? And then there was the socalled no-blame culture: in some delegates' eyes this was merely lip service, which did not take into account someone who was a persistent offender.

IT and ULDs rounded off the first day. NIIT Technologies' Karmjit Singh talked of empowering the ground handling sector but was cognisant of the stumbling blocks, namely prices and yield pressure as well as the lack of seamless interaction. Compliance was again called for, as was informed decision making. To move forward effectively, an understanding of Big Data was desirable and needed to be acted upon. IT came with a suite of advantages, including enhanced operational performance and efficiency as well as reduced costs. A robust technology would contribute to better customer service as well as help the user adhere to regulatory requirements. Over the coming three years, he believed, mobility would be at the top of the airport's wish-list: to meet that, the subject needed consideration now.

ULD Care's Bob Rogers discoursed on a vital, yet oft-overlooked element in the handler's arsenal. He termed it a shadow product yet the reality was, without the ULD, cargo aircraft in particular would take a backward step. Some 800,000 are required to support the industry globally and this total is worth some US\$800m. Huge costs were being incurred each year through their abuse (aircraft damage from ULDs touched US\$100m recently) and much of this expense was, he felt, unnecessary. After all, each party had an obligation of responsibility.

Key to a better scenario was more interest on the part of the management.



Kartal Ozcakir, Hilal Sonmez and Hayriye Bayram Aga TGS TURKISH GROUND SERVICES and Gashaw Ayalew UNITED AIRLINES



Alexander Neboga AIR ASTANA, Benny Chan HONG KONG AVIATION GROUND SERVICES and Paolo Ricciotti AIR ASTANA



Matthias Muellner and Thomas Wegl VIENNA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, Jessy Lin and Elaine Hung CHINA AIRLINES and Wolfgang Fasching VIENNA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT



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and Joji Miyamoto ANA NARITA AIRPORT SERVICE and Lynnetta Lim and Guruprasad Rao ROCKWELL COLLINS



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The face of the segment is changing, and it is seeing more temperature-controlled units as well as fire-containment ULDs and lightweight examples.

Day Two began with an early-awaited debate on the progress and validity of IATA's ISAGO and IGOM toolkits. Max Corsi presented the body's current situation, underlining the fact that a lack of regulation in the sector was the raison d'être for these projects.

IGOM currently involved 21 airlines and



Eddie Leong and Joanne Cheung SATS HK, Shailendra Kothari and Fabian Seide LUFTHANSA CARGO and Kok Hong Leong SATS HK

a dozen GSPs – which was not too large a section of society. Non IATA airlines were welcome but to date, none had joined.

None in the room disputed the reasons for IGOM and ISAGO but there were plenty of comments about how the frequency of audits had increased instead of the opposite - and that sometimes auditors had differing viewpoints. Allied to this was the occasional auditor who did not have knowledge of the whole process that he was actually auditing. And was the audit



Toralf Sonntag, Tom Stevenson, Hyung Hoon Kim SWISSPORT, Stark Xu, Bacchus Yin, Igor Spiridonov and Dmitry Gendelevich AIRBRIDGECARGO AIRLINES



revamped and this should be finished by 2016. However, many guestions remained and one telling query related to the March IATA ISAGO meeting in which handler



Susan Doris Parungao MIASCOR GROUND HANDLING CORPORATION, Max Corsi GLOBAL AVIATION CONSULTING and Rowena Flores MIASCOR GROUND HANDLING CORPORATION



Marcus Ma AIR INDIA SATS AIRPORT SERVICES, Simon Ng and Peter Hewett FTIHAD AIRWAYS and Aiesh Kurakkaran, AIR INDIA SATS AIRPORT SERVICES



GROUNDFORCE, Shraga Richter EL AL ISRAEL AIRLINES and Glaucia Mara Loebmann GLOBALIA HANDLING / GROUNDFORCE



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for the handler, the station or the airline? There was confusion over this. Then there

was the question of confidence in ISAGO:

it seemed that IATA members were not all

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input was not only far down the agenda but was also limited in discussion time. As several delegates present mentioned, handlers needed to be a part of the decision-making process, not merely given the findings of others.

From a heated debate to a rather more fundamental issue: that of vocational training. Craig McBride of dnata talked on the need for understandable, portable and valid certificates that could be applied to posts around the world, irrespective of that country's certification system. It wasn't an impossible dream; and it could be realised, once the fundamental content of a country's educational qualifications was compared with that of another. Training, and courses, could not be emphasised enough in his opinion: and as evidence, he showed an image of an A380 being handled, mentioning that some 102 courses hinged on this aircraft alone... As an update for the audience, he added that shortly dnata would be offering training courses to third parties.

The last morning of the conference ended with the popular open debate which featured industry leaders who were on the stage to field questions from the audience. Celebi, Worldwide Flight Services and SATS were all represented and topics discussed ranged from the growing presence of procurement through consolidation of the handling sector and the rise in outsourced ground handling. Was partnership actually a viable word when talking of the relationship between handler and airline? Had safety really improved on the ramp over the last decade? Ought airports form independent handling companies to foster the competitive element? Were there any ideas for enhancing the routines of the ramp in the way that the check-in side of the equation had benefited in recent years? And what plans and initiatives were on the table to reduce ground damage in the years ahead? All these, and other issues, were aired in the forum.

The event closed in the afternoon following the comprehensive training and safety session with BFS's Colin Temple and Maurizio Anichini.



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Fatal attraction?

Stopping serious and fatal injuries is possible, as Martin Dean of BST explains.

afety improvement depends on reducing exposure. Until recently, it was assumed that all types of injuries, including serious injury and fatality (SIF) events, resulted from the same pool of exposures. Reduce exposures to the more frequent but less severe injuries, it was thought, and you would necessarily reduce exposures to those events "at the top of the triangle." The problem is that while industry did get better at reducing injuries generally (quite a lot better, in fact, over the past 20 years), the rate of fatalities has remained virtually unchanged.

Research into SIFs is helping explain why this is the case and has opened up new ways for organisations to apply existing safety tools to the problem of SIFs. Among those tools, the hierarchy of controls, with its structured framework of exposure reduction methodologies, offers organisations one of the most promising ways to create systematic exposure reduction for SIF events. To do that, however, organisations must overcome the barriers that have prevented the hierarchy of controls from being used to its full extent until now.

What's stopping you from addressing SIF exposure?

Exposure reduction activities of any type are a function of how we think about injury causation. If we think injuries are mostly caused by people being careless, we tend to focus on training solutions. If we see injuries as a result of poor equipment, we will focus on capital expenditure, and so on. When it comes to serious injuries and fatalities, industry has long relied on Heinrich's safety triangle to describe the



relationship between types of injuries. But while it turns out that the model is accurate descriptively (less severe injuries occur more frequently than more severe injuries), it is not accurate predictively (in other words, there is not a constant ratio between injury types as some people assert). In a similar way, other assumptions about accident causation (that it's either "technical failure" or "human error") or metrics (for example, low injury rates indicate that safety generally is well managed) are proving to be oversimplified, inaccurate, and often downright harmful. While every organisation is different, we



have seen these assumptions lead to several common barriers to effective SIF exposure reduction.

Firstly, your safety systems have a significant blind spot. Many serious events are preceded by years in which the rate of recordable injuries is low, very low, or improving. In retrospect, the indicators of impending disaster were available: they just weren't detected by traditional safety measures. This blind spot can lull leaders into a false sense of security about the true state of performance and deflect essential resources away from problem areas.

Secondly, your accident investigation processes aren't as good as you think. Research shows that SIF events tend to have different causes and correlates than less severe events. Yet many organisations still conduct accident investigations as though every event could become serious and let actual outcome (rather than potential) dictate the level of attention. For example, a sprain caused by manual lifting (a low SIF potential) will be given the same resource and attention as a sprain caused by movement to avoid being struck by a moving vehicle (a high SIF potential). The result is a "flattening" effect as organisations dilute resources to give all events equal resources, rather than ensure events with more serious potential get proportionately greater depth of investigation.

Thirdly, your organisation treats serious injury and fatality events as "one-offs" rather than part of a pattern. We often hear leaders say "accidents sometimes happen" or "we don't know where these events are coming from." These leaders aren't callous. Many are deeply troubled by the persistence of SIF events. What's really happening is that leaders have been hamstrung by a paradigm that misrepresents the nature of SIF events and fails to connect the dots to the bigger picture. The circumstances that lead to an SIF event are complex and their precursors can exist for a long time. Further complicating the matter is the fact that SIF events are much less frequent than less severe events, making data analysis challenging.

Lastly, your organisation is focused on fixing people, not exposures. Often, this barrier is a function of an organisation's view of safety generally. If safety is not valued or not well connected to the mission of the organisation (or in some cases, if it is seen as a burden), there will be little investment in developing safety professionals, engaging leaders in safety, or integrating safety activities with operational practices. This barrier is often manifested within the hierarchy of controls as a lot of corrective actions focused on the bottom tiers, where reliability is highly dependent on employee behaviour.

Using the hierarchy of controls

The goal of any safety activity is to isolate the worker, as much as possible, from exposure to risk. Some ways of doing this are more effective and reliable than others. The hierarchy of controls is the logic essential for determining which controls are necessary. While the logic is



Contribution to The Hierarchy of Controls

Figure 1. The hierarchy of controls: effect on exposure.

simple - use the highest level of control whenever possible and supplement with lower levels of control as required - the application of the hierarchy of controls must be carried out with consideration given to actual budgets and financial realities, along with the urgency for the solution. When it comes to SIF exposures, the highest control possible must always be used. Sometimes multiple controls are used.

The tiers in the hierarchy of controls span a range from most to least effective (Figure 1). As you would expect, the focus of the control also changes as you progress down the hierarchy. Tiers of the hierarchy can be roughly grouped into those steps that are exposure focused and those that are employee focused.

To begin with, exposure-focused controls can be utilised to minimise or eliminate the *rôle* of behavioural variability, that is, their effectiveness doesn't depend on what employees do to work. Elimination of risk involves removing exposure to the hazard in a way that is not subject to behavioural variability, for example redesigning a system to remove the exposure. Substitution involves replacing the hazardous element with an alternative, such as swapping a toxic material with a non-toxic material, and engineering controls referring to the use of hardware systems to reduce exposure. Here, for example, you might consider enclosures to isolate equipment, ventilation systems, machine guards and safety interlocks. While there is still some behavioural variation in the effectiveness of this approach (since the controls must be kept in place and maintained), the reliability is higher than with PPE or Administrative Controls.

Moving on, employee-focused controls can also be implemented, though their effectiveness is dependent on behavioural variability. A variety of personal protective equipment, such as hard hats, protective gloves and suits, respiratory protective equipment, fall protection equipment, face shields and flame-retardant clothing, is widely used in an array of applications and is useful as part of the overall safety strategy. PPE also has the lowest behavioural reliability. As well as PPE, administrative controls might be used, which involve carrying out procedures to reduce exposure to risk, for example the requirement of work permits for high hazard tasks or a limitation on the length of time an individual may be exposed to a particular hazard. While more reliable than PPE, this approach is still highly dependent on behaviour; the procedure will do little good unless it

is followed rigorously and consistently. Finally, gimmicks, incentives and hollow threats may be implemented, in the hope that motivating employees to work safely will reduce risk exposure.

Ultimately, when it comes to SIF prevention, organisations must first look to exposure-focused controls. Yet, too often, the corrective actions recommended for events with SIF potential focus on faster, less expensive (and less reliable) remedies, such as requiring PPE or sending the employee for more training.

Enabling stronger exposure correction

There are several things leaders must do to ensure effective use of the hierarchy of controls. To start with, thorough and ongoing training should be provided for those who conduct incident investigations. Your team must be well educated about the importance of potential, the distinct nature of SIF events and their precursors, how to recognise SIF potential in an event, and how to identify remedies for SIF exposures as close to elimination as possible.

Additionally, the accident investigation process itself would benefit from a revamp. Too often, an accident investigation is a dry, transactional process that describes the bare bones mechanics of an event. People who weren't there and who aren't close to the work will have trouble understanding the urgency or picturing the context. Investigators should be trained to write compelling case narratives that allow the reader to visualise what happened.

Another potential strategy is to give visibility to SIF exposures. Some organisations use a SIF exposure rate to supplement other reporting and help guide decision making and strategy. An effective SIF rate captures data to measure the rate of exposure to SIFs, both the exposures that resulted in an actual fatality or serious injury plus those that have the reasonable potential to result in an SIF. Measuring the rate of potential SIFs expands the number of data points to a level where we can observe patterns and take action.

Finally, the personal approach: participate in the investigation process. Make it a habit to question decisions made about exposure control strategies. Were higher reliability alternatives considered? If relatively low reliability solutions were selected, are there longer-term alternatives that will employ higher reliability strategies? While not every exposure can be addressed through elimination, neither should every exposure be addressed through PPE.

Taking the lead

Ultimately, leaders are responsible for making sure that the exposures are addressed. When SIF-potential events do happen, leaders must stay involved both to understand the circumstances and to closely follow the corrective and protective actions from recommendation to execution. How leaders communicate the event, what was learned, and its implications help shape how people see and respond to future exposures.

Martin Dean is Vice President of Delivery, EMEA for BST. He leads strategic client initiatives in Europe, the Middle East and North African region and has more than 20 years of safety management experience in over 40 countries.



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Istanbul meeting

The 28th IGHC Ground Handling Conference is almost upon us.

his year IATA has chosen the crossroads between East and West for its annual industry event. The IGHC in Istanbul will be hosted by Turkish Airlines and runs from April 26-29. With topics such as global industry standards, ramp innovation and business growth tackled in the past, this year's event promises to address a key theme, echoing the above opening line. "Value at the crossroads of service and costs" will be uppermost in IATA stakeholders' minds.

What's in store?

This year's event will follow the pattern established in previous conferences. To that end there will be an array of industry speakers and an exhibition area, together with ample opportunity for networking as well as a Gala Dinner. IATA expects to draw upwards of 750 delegates for this year's conference and a number of policies are on the agenda for discussion. Amongst the topics will be global standardisation of ground operations procedures. This particular subject is a very big bone of contention and still the sector has not managed to establish a format for operational procedures that seems to be acceptable to all parties concerned.

Another subject is that of shaping the industry agenda for ground operations: if this can be focused enough, there should be benefits for all parties concerned. Lastly, time will be devoted to the Standard Ground Handling Agreement document: what changes are deemed advisable - and what lies ahead?

Added to this will be updates on the latest industry developments.

Istanbul will thus play host to handlers, airlines and manufacturers, along with other specialised parties such as those whose work lies in the IT sector. Other solutions providers will be present to round off the assembly.

The agenda

Delegates can look forward to a diverse range of plenary sessions. Improving the customer's experience

is an ongoing challenge within an industry that is continually changing and this vast subject will be discussed at length. On a similar note, the aim of simplifying the basic act of ground handling is still a hot potato: can agreement be reached between all the parties involved? An extension of this is the topic of preparing for the future: what exactly will need to be in place to take care of tomorrow's traveller? The recent announcement in connection with baggage tracking (Resolution 753) should ensure that a passenger's bag is retrievable, even if it should go astray. This will be a comfort to the traveller, but what about the handler's new responsibilities in this context?

The second day will look at enhanced operations, with the twin topics of globalisation and standardisation very much to the fore: these two nouns are part of the aviation lexicon now and no-one can really afford to think regionally these days.

Safety on the ramp, a subject that is often discussed within the pages of *Ground Handling International*, will come in for discussion also: the spectre of that multi-billion dollar price tag for inadvertent mishaps on the ramp is one that has been hard to ignore, let alone dispel. Finally, the second day will also dwell on the cargo side of the equation.

Wednesday sessions take for their topic business development and leadership: during the day there will be an opportunity for delegates to learn more about how the digital age is transforming the sector. A financial health check will be on the cards too, as will the subject of the electronic invoice in line with IATA's aim to drastically cut the quantity of paper generated by the aviation sector in a 12 month period.

Alongside these sessions will be a variety of workshops, all aimed at informing and educating those attending.

At the end of the conference IATA will be staging a training session in line with the subject of the SGHA. This will be a special version of the full workshop, albeit excluding the Effective Negotiations Behaviour modules.

IGHC 2015 April 26 - April 29 Hilton Istanbul Bomonti Hotel Istanbul, Turkey • Dirk Schmitt is the new CEO for Swissport Cargo Services Germany & Austria. Prior to his new assignment at Swissport, Schmitt spent ten years in the aviation and air cargo industry and has held various senior management positions in Europe, including one at Fraport in Frankfurt. He joins Swissport from Luxair CARGO.

• Rochdi Touri has been appointed FBO Director Swissport Executive Aviation in Nice.

• Emirsyah Satar is to step down as Chief Executive of Garuda Indonesia.

• Aer Lingus has named Stephen Kavanagh as its new Chief Executive.

• German construction and services group Bilfinger has picked Per Utnegaard to become Chief Executive of the group. Utnegaard has been Swissport's Chief Executive since 2007.

• Thomas Fred Herkommer has been appointed as Chief Operating Officer at DOLL. He will manage the company together with Chief Financial Officer Mark Toschek. • Budget carrier airberlin has confirmed the appointment of Stefan Pichler as its new Chief Executive Officer.

• Etihad Airways has announced the appointment of John Friel as its new General Manager in South Africa.

• The Board of Directors of AirAsia X have announced the appointment of Datuk Kamarudin Meranun as Group CEO, AirAsia X; and Benyamin Bin Ismail as acting CEO of AirAsia X Berhad. This is a part of an ongoing reorganisation exercise.

In this newly created *rôle*, Kamarudin will spearhead the development of the overarching strategy for the AirAsia X Group, which encompasses AirAsia X Berhad, AirAsia X Thailand and Indonesia AirAsia Extra.

• René de Groot has been appointed as Chief Operating Officer of KLM Royal Dutch Airlines. He succeeds Pieter Elbers, who became President and CEO of KLM on October 15.

• The Board of Directors of gategroup Holding has appointed Christoph Schmitz as the new Chief Financial Officer and Member of the Executive Management Board. Schmitz took up his new position with gategroup on January 19, succeeding Thomas Bucher.

• Andrew Gibson is stepping down as CEO gategroup; the Board has appointed Xavier Rossinyol as new CEO.

• The current CEO of Qantas International, Simon Hickey, along with CEO of Qantas Domestic, Lyell Strambi, have decided to leave the Qantas Group. The revised executive team will now include Andrew David (CEO of Qantas Domestic), Gareth Evans (CEO of Qantas International and Freight) and John Gissing, who becomes Group Executive Associated Airlines & Services.

• Alitalia has lined up former Ferrari head Luca Cordero di Montezemolo as Chairman and Etihad Chief Executive James Hogan as his deputy.

• Handler dnata has appointed Emma Deane as Vice President Commercial & Business Development. In the rôle, Emma will support the growth of dnata's UAE ground handling and marhaba operations.



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Ramp Safety Awards 2015

Ramp Safety Awards page. As in past years, the nominations that are presented here are just a few of those we collect over the course of the year.

Our aim is not only to illustrate to the reader the realities of working on the ramp today but also to highlight good practice and remind ourselves that the task of the turnaround can never be taken for granted. Each working day brings with it fresh challenges and the chance of the unexpected: and it is knowing how to react, or in some cases pre-empt, that wins the day.

But back to the reasons for this page and the Awards. We are always looking out for examples of good practice on the ramp; attention to detail in a process or procedure; any example of GSE that has been modified to make it safer to use; or any initiative that has made working on the ramp a safer experience. We would like to hear from you on any (or indeed all) of the above topics. In the first instance please get in touch with the Editor: alwyn@groundhandling.com

Good luck with your entry for this year's Awards!

SWISSPORT MAROC System-wide

With a desire to improve upon the already existing levels of safety, Swissport Maroc decided to modify two sorts of its GSE. The first of these was passenger steps, purchased from JBT and EINSA: these now benefit from the installation of a brake system to the side rails, which replaces the pre-existing spring-loaded system. Turning to the ambulift, the handler has also installed sensors on the rear platform to avoid any problems should a person be present in the hazard zone area.

ENTEBBE GROUND HANDLING SERVICES Uganda

On August 28 2014, while a ramp driver was towing a GPU with a tractor along an access road, the connecting pin of the tractor broke and the disconnected GPU hit another moving tractor, which was towing a toilet cart in the opposite direction. Apart from the damage to equipment, there were no serious injuries to the staff involved.

Initial investigations tended to assume that speed could have been one of the contributing factors. But this was later ruled out when reference was made to the vehicle tracking system report, which showed that the tractor had, in fact, been moving at an acceptable speed on the access road under the circumstances. Subsequently, the technical design of the connector pin was identified as the root cause and the equipment was taken out of circulation for modification.

ENHAS has recently equipped 80% of its mobile equipment with car tracking systems. A lesson learnt here was the benefit of the vehicle tracking system in analysing the root cause of a ramp incident.

GLOBALIA HANDLING (GROUNDFORCE) Gran Canaria

In October 2014 the handler's turnaround co-ordinators reported two events related to pushback manoeuvring. During towbar tractor disconnection, pushback was completed and the crews confirmed that the brakes were set; however, the aircraft began to move forwards. In both cases, the driver was able to leave the area immediately and avoid the collision, while the turnaround co-ordinator asked the crew again to set the brakes. There were neither personnel injuries nor damage, thanks to the rapid response of our ramp personnel.

As a preventative action, the disconnection towbar procedure has been reviewed, in order to avoid any aircraft movement that might arise through a misunderstanding between ground personnel and the flight deck. Consequently, before the towbar disconnection, a chock must now be placed at the nose landing gear, to protect both personnel and GSE. The chock is then removed after towbar disconnection.

SWISSPORT Glasgow

Craig Sellar is employed by SMART Handling at the Swissport Glasgow operation.



It was later reported that this aircraft would have suffered definite engine failure because of fan blade damage on take-off, should Craig not have noticed the noise: he thus was instrumental in preventing millions of pounds' worth of damage.

In the event, the cost ended up in the tens of thousands of pounds as opposed to the whole new engine that would have been required (and which would have cost over f1m). Fortunately, the airline managed to resolve the damage by replacing the fan blades.

This aircraft was made serviceable again in a much more timely manner, saving the airline lost revenue as the damaged aircraft would have been grounded for longer.

Not only did Craig go above and beyond his duty in simply noticing a noise he thought unusual but he also saved passengers from a potentially frightening ordeal.







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Heathrow humming

The opportunity of a quick tour of Heathrow in March revealed much forward thinking, writes the Editor.

et's be frank: when your station boasts the largest electric-powered fleet of any in Europe, then that's a mighty big feather to have waving in your cap. With that accolade, though, comes the requirement for ongoing work and investment in this specialist area which is why I found myself talking to Spencer Thomas, Airside Environment Manager and Keith Polkey, Ramp Assurance Manager at the UK's biggest airport recently.

At the time of writing, Heathrow is home to some 845 electric tugs, which says much for the airport's foresight as well as its infrastructure. As Spencer points out, the environmental ball was set in motion back in 2010, although to be historically accurate, there were already pockets of electric activity at the station before then. SAS was an early adopter of electric, reflecting its clean operation back home at its hub, perhaps, but it wasn't the only one: Babcock was running an electric vehicle for outsized baggage, too.

Despite the obvious financial advantages of battery power (it has been calculated, for instance, that running a fossil fuel-powered tractor at Heathrow costs considerably more compared to electric), together with the environmentally-friendly presence that electric brings to the workplace, the pair readily admit that persuading the airport authority to look anew at its GSE policy has not been the work of a moment.

"Air quality is, of course, a big factor in all this," affirms Spencer, "but, strangely, electric and hydrogen are not always seen as the obvious answers. There are all sorts of constraints with electric, too: for example, electric vehicles can have an almost indefinite presence at the airport whereas fossil-fuelled GSE is subject to strict guidelines in terms of how long it can be used. We are currently building a case for the reduction of NO_v, which is an important factor: the problem has been, though, guantifying this pollutant. It's very difficult to draw comparisons and come up with useful data. There is arguably more interest in CO_2 – that's higher profile."

Keith mentions that five year plans tend to be the norm when it comes to thinking ahead. "But whilst that's fine for diesel, it doesn't really work out with electric. An electric cost analysis requires longer. Then there's the question of residual values. Some would-be adopters are put off by the uncertainty of what second hand electric GSE will be worth in a few years' time. What's really required here is bravery: it's a leap of faith, in some respects."

According to them, hydrogen vehicle trials are some 18 months away yet, so really the current focus is that of electric. The airport now has five brand new Nissan Leaf cars in addition to a Peugeot eco-diesel for evaluation; there are a further dozen hybrids around the airport, too. Keeping up with the electric influx



has meant more and more charging points (there are some 500 or so) but now the airport really needs to look at triple phase charging for reducing charging times, in order to reap the full benefits that electric brings. Smart charging, allied to telematics, would complete the picture.

"Simply put, we need to be able to manage the whole process," explains Keith. "That way, it will all work properly. There's no worry here about electric, either: charging and range are all understood. The data from the pooling results have proved that electric GSE would be viable, and have taken the uncertainty out of the equation. Comments have been positive from the operators and we see the low impact GSE as the future. It's also interesting to note that we are seeing more and more electric requests featuring in handling tenders."

Ahead lies an electric trial that will involve Posicharge, Charlatte tugs and a JBT hi-lift: clear evidence that Heathrow is keen to embrace a sustainable future.





Your flexible friend?

With the passage of time, the incidence of composite aircraft is only going to increase. With that in mind, handlers are going to have to become more attuned to this generation of aircraft's very particular requirements.

lastic. Undoubtedly one of the most important developments of the twentieth century, plastic and its offshoots transformed many an industry overnight. Its incorporation with toys and domestic products was just the start: when plastic was adopted by those involved in the armaments industry, for instance, the writing was truly on the wall. It was thus only a matter of time before the aviation sector should take an interest.

Boeing, of course, got the party underway when it first mooted the concept of an aircraft that would not rely solely on aluminium in its structure. It's hard to believe, but the Dreamliner was first discussed, albeit in more radical terms, in the last decade of the last century. By 2003, though, the 7E7, as it was codenamed then, was on the drawing board: but gone were the thoughts about sub-sonic, large aircraft travel, their place taken by a more conventional and recognisable format, that of the twin jet engined configuration. However, this new aircraft would bring to market something as revolutionary as the transition from wood to alloy all those decades back...

What Boeing was doing was not lost on rival Airbus, who in turn started to investigate this new technology and the benefits that a composite structure would introduce to the aviation sector. Initially, though, it appears that the French company was not unduly worried about jumping on the bandwagon. Designs were propounded in 2004, which coincidentally was the very same year that All Nippon Airways signed on the dotted line for the initial B787 examples.

Thus it is that two composite aircraft are now in possession of airworthiness certificates. What's of interest to us, though, is the aircraft construction: both the B787 and the A350 have over 50% of their structure deriving from composite materials. They haven't been the harbingers in this, though: earlier aircraft from these two stables have included lightweight materials (anything up to 15%, in fact), whilst the mammoth A380 today typically boasts around 25% of these materials in its structure.

Handling considerations

Whilst everyone will agree that technology is a wonderful thing, all new technology comes at a price - and sometimes that price is a high one. When, in 2013, Qatar Aviation Services had the bravery to admit puncturing the fuselage of a B787 with a catering truck, the handling company probably hadn't bargained for the outcome. That incident necessitated a Boeing team flying out to Doha, the erection of a dust-free environment around the aircraft and a repair schedule that lasted for three weeks. But this wasn't a lone incident - merely a reminder that aircraft are fragile, whatever they are made of. and that to err is a human characteristic.

There have been other incidences of damage to this new wave of composite aircraft, some made public, some not. It concerns us little here how public these events are actually made: what's relevant to us is that very special composite skin.

At the 2014 Ground Damage Stakeholders' meeting, Arne Lewis, a Boeing Composite Engineer, gave a presentation on the subject of handling the new Dreamliner. In it, he talked in some detail about the series of skins that go to make up the structure known generically as composite. He stopped short, however, of actually being able to say categorically what would constitute a severe enough impact to render the aircraft unserviceable. With aluminium, the alloy obligingly exhibits a dent whereas with composite, the kinetic energy of the object which contacts it will not necessarily leave behind any mark or indentation, since the composite springs back into place. This says a lot for the structural integrity of the new material but brings with it a question mark. A handler will have to ask whether an impact was of such a magnitude that the aircraft should be grounded, for further checks. Or whether the aircraft could, in fact, fly. Clearly, someone has to make a decision on this, a decision that cannot be taken lightly, given the financial ramifications of a cancelled flight.

The Boeing engineer endorsed the use of a ramp tool that could view the affected area and which would give the operator a reading, along the lines of "Go" or "No go."

But that won't necessarily help a handler where, perhaps, the area under question has sustained damage before - will it? There seems to be no simple answer to this poser, nor indeed to what exactly constitutes an unacceptable impact. According to Hyonny Kim, a Professor in the Department of Structural Engineering at the UC of San Diego, the problem is rather more complex than many people realise. In tests with a mockedup composite section he has been able to show that repeated impact on an area can result in shear tie damage and frame cracking without any skin or skin stringer delamination becoming evident. In his opinion, the sort of hand held instrument proposed here will only find delamination damage within the skin, or separation between the stringer flange and the skin.

FAA and EASA reports

Some of the above points have not, thankfully, been lost on the

authorities. Indeed, back in 2011, the US Government Accountability Office released a report on the status of the FAA's actions when it came to the matter of overseeing the safety of composite aircraft: this was GAO-11-849 Aviation Safety. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the report highlighted the challenges in detecting (and characterising) damage in composite structures, as well as commenting on the need for adequate composite repairs. Tellingly, it dwelled on the point that defects could be overlooked and that a basic tap on the skin might not bring to light any delamination problems. The problem continues, though: the reliability of detecting surface flaws in composite structures is not yet particularly well established, and so it is guite conceivable that significant damage might not be reported, leading to a greater safety risk.

In 2012 The European Aviation Safety Agency funded a research project on this very topic. Composite Damage Metrics and Inspection was designed to address the very real concerns over the issues raised by the adoption of composite materials, and its findings made for interesting reading. In summary, three main points can be picked out as references for the industry.

First, the report's authors underlined the need for standardisation in the realm of GSE, specifically in respect of safety systems. In acknowledging the fact that ramp vehicles were commercially available with a range of safety devices, it noted that these were typically optional and, ultimately, very much at the whim of the fleet buyer.

A second point raised was that of monitoring systems. The report



suggested that GSE might be equipped with proximity sensors and automatic position adjustment, especially for the type of GSE that works up close to an aircraft on a regular basis. A beltloader would be a case in point here. It added that the recording of sensor and camera data could contribute towards supporting the overall reporting procedure.

The third area highlighted was that of damage reporting and its process improvement. The report suggests that every inadvertent impact ought to be documented, whether on composite or aluminium skin, and duly assessed. It notes, as has been mentioned, that external evidence of an impact on a composite skin may well be difficult to discern, given the forgiving properties of the materials used. Arguably a more worrying comment was added to the text: the EASA notes that reporting has typically relied on visual examination of the outer skin structure, and that the rate of vehicle contact reporting is, frighteningly, only around 50%. As if this were not enough, the EASA goes on to say that even this incidence rate could decline, given the particular properties of the composite skin. In short, because of the carbon fibre reinforced polymer material employed, and its ability to reassume most, if not all, of its shape after an impact, visual signals may well be abeyance. This could lead to the possibility of an aircraft being dispatched

without any incident report being filed.

The report also suggests that in the event of a knock or impact, the suspected surface needs to be inspected to assess whether there is (or is not) any sub-surface damage.

As alluded to, there are various devices available for the inspection of a suspect area, ranging from visual aids (including lenses) and the adoption of light waves to a penetrating liquid application (which relies on capillary action to sink into minute crevices). Radiography, thermography and acoustic techniques can also be employed: with the first of these, any irregularities are presented with a different density from the material that surrounds them. Thermography relies upon the analysis of thermoelastic stresses, with infra-red thermocameras able to detect the temperature of the bodies being analysed. Any defects will correspond to changes in temperature. In contrast, cracks and debonding can be picked out through the use of acoustic technology: in this context there is a hand-held device, the ramp damage checker, which has been designed expressly to address this situation. Once set and calibrated, a high frequency sound pulse generated by an ultrasonic transducer will travel through the material until it encounters an air boundary, at which point it will reflect and alert the operator of the irregularity. The device's pulse should come from the back wall (or inside surface) of the composite; should there be any delamination or irregularity, then the echo is received sooner, thus alerting the operator to a potential problem. For the sake of the ramp, the device works on simple "go" or "no go" principles.





On the box?

Ground power, and its associated offspring, is the subject of this issue's industry focus.

he past year for PAGE Industries has been phenomenal," declares Brian Piety, the enterprise's President.

"We have seen tremendous growth in our customer base, products sold and exposure to more locations throughout North America and around the world. Specifically, many of the major US carriers have begun to standardise on the PAGE product line. Canada has seen record growth, and we have made very good progress and sales in Spain, Germany, the Middle East, Korea and China, with locations such as the UK, Lithuania and Turkey showing strong signs of promise. Most of this interest in sales has been centred around the PAGE PCAir hoses and our new PCAir adaptor, along with the PAGE baggage chute. Both of these are different from what has been available in the past and each has unique features, making these the most liked products in the PCAir market.

"Recent interest has been in connection with the PAGE 400 Hz cable assembly; this includes a moulded connector that comes standard, with a thermal switch and broken neutral protection, and a new replaceable 400 Hz wear nose. This HARDNOSE product has exploded in popularity because of its unsurpassed safety features and longevity. All this while, though, it incorporates, whenever possible, our unique safety green colour that makes our products stand out visually from the competition. "In terms of modifying our product offering, all PAGE has done is bring more and more new products to market. New products that we've introduced in the past 12 months include our baggage chute, PCAir connector, 400 Hz cable assembly (that includes the connector body and HARDNOSE), a baggage chute service platform, a lightweight and extremely durable PCAir duct, a digital reactive load bank and a unique PCAir hose reel, as well as many different pieces of equipment for use on central 400 Hz systems."

A worldwide presence

The ITW group can be considered as a conglomerate, encompassing as it does the brands of AXA Power, Hobart, Houchin, J&B Aviation and ITW Military. With this sort of presence, the group can be considered as one of the market's most experienced suppliers of ground equipment. In fact, ITW GSE provides the biggest variety of pointof-use, solid state and diesel ground power units, as well as the world's smartest PCA, all of which are based on a modular design.

"Over the years, we have delivered approximately 80,000 units to customers in all parts of the world. This last year has accounted for some 2,500 alone, so the year has been good for us," declares Poul Elvstroem, Vice President, Sales & Marketing. "We have won more big airport projects and are convinced that our efforts in consolidating and adapting our business to fit into a global market that we started a couple of years ago is the main reason behind the good result. By sharing information and working together as one global team, we can serve our customers in the best possible way. We can deliver technical support before, during and after the equipment delivery, as well as supply good and reliable products."

The review period's key recipients have been the US, Canada, South America, Saudi Arabia and Russia; that said, traditional markets in the Middle East and Europe (including France, the UK and Scandinavia) have not been neglected by the manufacturer.

Poul adds that Saudi Arabia has become an important market for ITW GSE.

"At present, we are installing 100 AXA 2400 units, of the 90 kVA 400 Hz type, in King Abdulaziz International airport in Jeddah. Some of these stands are MARS stands that will accommodate code C and code F aircraft. The installation will be commissioned towards the end of the year as the new terminal is scheduled to be operational before the end of 2015. A vast number of AXA Power Coils and AXA Power PCA units have also been delivered to other significant projects in Saudi Arabia: both Madinah airport and King Khalid International in Riyadh have benefited. ITW has equipped Terminals 1, 2, 5 and the Royal Terminal with 62 Power Coils in all, as well as 40 preconditioned air units. The last batch is expected to be installed this spring.

"Also in 2014, our Russian ITW GSE distributor did very well, in spite of the crises in Russia. An amazing number of GPUs has been delivered to airports in Yakutsk, Talagi, Ufa, Sabetta and Abakan, to mention just a few."



AXA has benefited from several key markets

ITW GSE was also awarded a contract to provide 50 of the Hobart 90CU420 mobile ground power carts to the Canadian National Defence, in support of the Canadian Air Force. Deliveries began in 2014 and were due to be completed this year. These units will be utilised at various airforce bases throughout Canada. Calgary International has equipped 22 gates with ITW GSE power and preconditioned air units. The order included 22 bridge-mounted, point-of-use PCA units and 22 Hobart ADV bridgemounted, solid-state converters.

South America has seen tremendous growth through the enhancement of its infrastructure in anticipation of the summer Olympics in 2016. Of particular note, Confins airport in Belo Horizonte installed 49 Hobart 2300 Power Coils during a renovation of the passenger terminal last year. Similarly, Viracopos International in Campinas has introduced 28 Power Coils during the construction of the new terminal at the airport.

The most popular model in the range is the 2400 series: small and simple, it is also robust and reliable, says ITW. It utilises the Plug & Play system, which automatically compensates for voltage drops along the cable. Software upgrades can be effected by merely plugging in a USB stick – that's how easy to use the system actually is. The 2400 series has been designed to handle all kinds of aircraft, including Power Factor 1 types. It is unique in that it allows a 400% overload capacity at output as standard. By virtue of this, the same GPU can be used for aircraft of virtually any size – including the latest generation aircraft such as the A380, the A350, the B787 Dreamliner and the forthcoming B777.

Finally, the company's new 4400 series (a 90 kVA engine-driven GPU) has also entered the market. This GPU is equipped with the ITW GSE common user interface. Besides this, it is a quiet, fuel-efficient apron power system, ideal for supplying power to all kinds of aircraft wherever an independent external power source is needed. The 4400 features a weatherproof canopy made of medium-density polyethylene which is remarkably tough, supremely reliable and fully recyclable. The sliding canopy can even be entirely removed by hand in less than two minutes, thus allowing easy access for regular checks of fuel, oil and water.

The big cable trays are made of

tough, durable material and they act as protective bumpers, with the advantage that they will never corrode if scratched. The canopy is also designed with rounded edges that are safer for operators; they also reduce the risk of damaging aircraft, vehicles or other apron equipment in the event of collision. Should major damage occur, it is very easy to swap the canopy or cable trays.

Expectations for 2015

Poul says that he has high expectations for the coming year.

"We have already signed the contract for Cairo airport's development project and the Abu Dhabi Midfield Terminal project. And our Chinese representative recently won a contract for the delivery of 83 Power Coil units for an expansion project in Zhengzhou Xinzheng International airport. The first delivery will take place in August 2015 and commissioning is expected to be completed before the end of this year.

"All in all, we expect a record year in terms of new products in our portfolio. Never before have we launched so many new developments and never



before with so many truly differentiating customer benefits. With a great portfolio, dedicated employees and fewer manufacturing locations with a higher volume and output, we have indeed geared ITW GSE for global aviation growth. It all means that the ITW GSE group is stronger than ever before."

France and Belgium

Over in mainland Europe, Guinault-Lebrun has been thriving since its Franco-Belgian merger. The manufacturer offers a unique solution for APU substitution: 400 Hz power supply, air conditioning units and air start units. Guinault-Lebrun occupies a very special position in the market, being something of an expert in the refrigeration industry and that of electrical power, and is not simply a GSE specialist.

Its fundamental expertise in these fields, backed by the long term strategy of a family-owned organisation, means that it can deliver a complete solution, which is a substitute for the aircraft APU on the ground. The enterprise is committed to performance for both current and future aircraft operations. In fact, the company claims to sell aircraft power, aircraft engine starting and aircraft comfort temperatures instead of merely GPU, ASU and ACU facilities.

This enterprise also claims the lowest TCO in terms of its GPU. This assertion it bases on the use of the most efficient engine rpm on the market, that of 1714 rpm, which it considers to be the best compromise between performance, response time and fuel consumption. Added to this is the high efficiency Guinault alternator that is manufactured in France and which is optimised for low load operation, which represents 70% of the typical operation time of a GPU. The unit also boasts an in-house manufactured electronic control system that resists sand and dusty wind, humidity and corrosive atmospheric conditions.

Designing the electronics and alternator internally offers great advantages in terms of obsolescence management, and it ensures compatibility with the most advanced aircraft. Its 400 Hz power supplies, solid state converters and diesel-driven GPUs have all been validated with the A350 at the Airbus facility.

Within the ASU range is found



Guinault-Lebrun: plenty of expertise

Guinault-Lebrun's exclusive electronic regulation, which is based on a variable speed (rpm) drive. This unique device ensures a higher life expectancy of the components, as well as a significant reduction in fuel consumption, contributing to a low TCO. This technology makes it possible to adjust the pressure (if necessary), limit the flow or add any control function which might be required in the future.

The company's air conditioning units have created a major change within the GSE market, bringing the possibility of effective substitution for the onboard APU of the largest existing aircraft under the most difficult climatic conditions. This unique opportunity has been identified by more and more airlines as a key cost-saving alternative while offering airports a quiet solution in the reduction of NO, and CO, emissions.

For wide-bodied aircraft, the critical challenge has always been that of delivering the necessary capacity to properly cool the aircraft cabin, whereas the key requirement for narrow body operations has been the implementation of a very efficient APU substitute. Thus a similar and unique refrigeration technology has been used to design both alternatives, each one being adapted to the airline's operational environment in order to offer a workable solution.

A Memphis solution

One US-based manufacturer is that of Air Mak Industries, which is sited in Memphis. The company has developed and tested a Tier IV F engine-powered 180 kVA aircraft ground power unit, which meets the latest EPA norms just in time for the implementation deadline on Tier IV engines. It comes equipped with the new MAK GSE monitor V8.0 that boasts a touchscreen GUI, displaying data in analogue and digital formats for ease of interpretation. Included is a troubleshooting guide and last service records for quick reference; it is also IP67 rated.

Air Mak has also announced a software dubbed the Remote Diagnostic Monitoring System, which is essentially a MAK wireless module that fits into an item of GSE that can capture operational data and which broadcasts it live on



Air Mak has announced diagnostic software

to a desktop via the cloud. It comes with in-built modules for maintenance management where customers can view forthcoming maintenance schedules and their planned costs, as well as order required spares, all from the software itself. Helpfully, operational faults and alarms are notified on a real-time basis via e-mail and SMS to customers.

"MAK RDMS has changed the way we manage our GSE as our operation cost has reduced as well as the time our technicians spend on manually writing down daily inspection data," commented an airline's planning executive, who made use of the RDMS for over six months. A dashboard gives all the critical parameters as graphical data, providing a bird's eye view of equipment conditions. Air Mak says that a fleet management software on this scale, with extensive data, has seldom been developed before now.

Best year ever

When someone says that the last 12 months have comprised the best year ever in the history of the company, that says a lot. These, though, are exactly the words of Jochen Philipp, Hitzinger Airport Equipment's Managing Director.

"We were able to secure big contracts for our new Static Frequency Converter, the S Power," he relates. "The sales of this new product line started off very well and exceeded all our expectations. We were able to convince a lot of customers that this was the product for them and they have been completely happy with it. Last year, we also received a big order for the delivery of approximately 250 units for military applications, which has been executed to the full satisfaction of our client. Furthermore, Stansted airport placed a large order with us, and we also have major ongoing projects with South African Airlines, All Nippon Airways, Aeroflot, Hamburg airport, Gatwick, dnata, Emirates, Pegasus Turkey and a lot of other well-known companies and airlines besides. Hitzinger has illustrated its market presence worldwide in all its product ranges and different applications and we look forward to presenting our newest developments at the InterAirport in October this year."

Meanwhile, in France, TLD has been



TLD has focussed on Stage 4 technology

hard at work with Stage 4 engine development.

With US Tier IV Final and Euro Stage 4 legislation in full effect, TLD has been very busy developing its products to incorporate engines that meet these stringent regulations. In its power division in the US, TLD's ACU, ASU, and GPU lines all have new green engines.

Air start units

For the ASU, the Scania DC13 engine powers the Aerzen dry rotary screw compressor, which has been at the heart of TLD air start units for over 32 years. The machine is designed to start all aircraft engines, except the GE-90 on the Boeing 777.

Whenever new engines are introduced to TLD products, all other facets of the product's design are studied in great detail. With the ASU, as an example, a new cooling package has been developed, which uses less engine power and consequently less fuel. In addition, the engine's top speed has been reduced to further improve fuel efficiency and to lower sound levels during maximum aircraft demand.

TLD's smart controls and throttle roll-back systems monitor and optimise delivered air performance to closely match aircraft requirements. A durable, galvanised frame with powder-coated aluminium panels provide the lowest levels of maintenance and the longest lifespan.

Air conditioners/heaters

The company's ACU-802S line has been updated with the new Cummins Tier IV F/Stage 4 engine. The ACU-802S takes the inherent efficiency advantages of the ACU-802 and provides improved fuel efficiency and previously unimaginable ease of operation.

The improved fuel efficiency is achieved by operating at the continuously optimised best speed via TLD's Advanced Control System, which matches the unit's performance to aircraft demand. Performance is optimised by automatically adjusting the operating speed to match the aircraft and prevailing ambient conditions. Through a very simple menu, the operator selects the type of aircraft to be cooled, and the ACU-802S does the rest. The speed of major components is monitored and regulated to ensure the appropriate amount of cooling or heating is delivered. TLD's infinitelyvariable screw compressor provides precise load control and automatically adjusts to any changes.

Moreover, the ACU-802S utilises its proven direct drive screw compressor,

OPTIMAL POVER AT THE AIRCRAFT

AXA 2400 COMPACT POWER



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ITW GSE is a strong and reliable partner with deliveries of more than 80.000 units to customers world-wide. We monitor the market trends and provide world-class know-how.



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It's all about connections

infinitely variable load control and vapour injection. Vapour injection significantly increases refrigerant flow at minimal increases in power consumption, essentially boosting compressor performance like a supercharger does for an engine. The screw compressor allows variable speed operation with the efficiency benefit of vapour injection over a wide operating range.

In periods of extremely low refrigeration system load, the compressor's infinitely-variable load control device is used to completely match the compressor's performance to the cooling load and make the most effective use of power possible. No other compressor technology provides this level of control and efficiency, which comes as a standard feature in all of TLD's direct drive air conditioning units.

Direct drive technology uses mechanical components to transmit engine power to the air conditioner components, eliminating the 15-20% inherent power loss associated with electrical power conversion found in diesel-electric systems. A single, industrial strength compressor designed for harsh environments where GSE is utilised, results in a simpler, more robust machine with easier operation and reduced maintenance costs.

In addition to the Tier IV F/ Stage 4 emissions engine, the unit remains environmentally-friendly, thanks to the use of R-134a refrigerant, which is used exclusively by TLD because of its efficiency and operation at lower condenser pressures, which is essential at higher ambient conditions.

The ACU-802S is the culmination of over 50 years of proven refrigeration design experience, combined with innovations focused on energy savings. TLD's direct drive technology, smart advanced control system and use of the cleanest engines available combine to provide an economical, efficient, and environmentally-friendly choice for today's aircraft cooling and heating requirements.

Ground power units

A few years ago, TLD released its fourth generation GPU in a more compact design that allowed for easier handling on today's congested tarmac, yet which maintained its full-size performance that airlines have grown accustomed to for over 25 years. Now, all TLD GPUs are offered with a Tier IV F/Com4 emissions engine, including the latest version in a 90 kVA rating.

All units run at an optimised 1,846 rpm, which provides better fuel consumption and ensures rapid transient response and frequency regulation required for today's next generation aircraft.

The heart of the TLD GPU is the second generation of its generator control module, which maintains precise generator control and protection while drastically simplifying the usage for the operator, who only has to press three buttons on the unit to provide power to the aircraft.

This operational simplicity carries over to the rest of the unit, in the form of an ultra low part count which results in previously unheard-of maintenance costs and TCO levels. Contributing to that is the unit's durable, galvanised frame and fibreglass and powder-coated aluminium panels which help to prolong life.

Many features that were previously optional are now designed into the standard configuration: these include cable tray rollers, forklift pockets, tie down rings, cable plug holders most recently, low fuel shutdown protection.

In addition, a new option has been developed to solve the expensive problem of GPU cables getting inadvertently pulled out of aircraft receptacles. Before power can be delivered to the aircraft, the system demands that the towbar be in the "up" position, holding the brake on. After servicing, the system forces the operator to stow the cable plugs in their holders before the towbar can be lowered and brakes removed. It is options such as these that provide equipment owners with solutions that truly affect their bottom line.

Ultimately, TLD says that it is focused on quality at all levels, including design, assembly and testing. By building quality into its products and with a basis in design simplicity and an ultra-low part count, the result is an extremely reliable machine that has the easiest operation and friendliest levels of maintenance, along with the lowest total cost of ownership.

Airbus benefits from Estonian technology

On to TET ESTEL, which is based in Estonia. Its Aviation Department Senior Sales Manager, Enver Khalilov, reports that the electric testing of its FCA 90 kVA converter has been successfully carried out in France. This testing has been conducted in the presence of experts from Aéroports de Paris and TDA Lefebure.

More recently, ESTEL completed the delivery of some its 400 Hz ground power units to Airbus. The supplied equipment is successfully operating in the technological production cycle that involves both the A320 and the



Success in France for ESTEL

A350. Airbus' 400 Hz specialists have confirmed that ESTEL's converters fully comply with the airframe manufacturer's technical requirements and European standards, namely EN 60204-1, ABD100 1.8.1 and ISO 6858.

At the beginning of the year ESTEL designed and developed a 180 kVA converter in accordance with Airbus' technical requirements; currently the 180 kVA converter is being tested in Toulouse within an A350 compatibility test campaign.

During the middle of 2014 ESTEL supplied GPUs to Rome's main airport, Bari airport, Pau airport, Lodz and Almaty airports. ESTEL was also chosen as the preferred GPU supplier for Samara airport in Russia.

Lately ESTEL has extended its chain of service centres in France, Italy and Russia: it can now field service engineers able to get to the customer in 24 hours, seven days a week. Finally, spare parts and critical components for all ESTEL equipment are in stock and available in Estonia, France, Italy, Finland and Russia.

New developments in a busy year

Speaking for Powervamp, Sales Manager Stuart Harrison declares that 2014 was an excellent year for the company.

"We saw a substantial increase in orders from both airport and MRO customers. London City airport now uses only our specially modified PV90-3 converters, and we are now the default provider to Birmingham. We are currently in talks with other UK airports and hope to be installing units on their aprons later this year."

Pictured here is the company's Sidewinder cable carrier: this product was actually developed in 2014 and is



Novel Sidewinder in action



Both aircraft and helicopters in Powervamp portfolio

currently undergoing successful trials at Heathrow.

Powervamp's PV-45 45 kVA GPU also continues to sell well, adds Stuart, with the helicopter market especially interested. "All of the traditional names in the North Sea helicopter market now use the PV-45 at their bases, both here in the UK and abroad."

Thinking outside the box?

Red Box International's Ashley Marshall also says that the company enjoyed a record year in 2014. Part of this success was due to the release of the Red Box hybrid GPUs, the so-called HybREDs, which combine a petrol engine with a bank of batteries to offer a very effective 28VDC combination unit. The weight



Record year for Red Box International

and size of this unit is unrivalled, he claims, making this GPU an obvious choice for business jet owners and operators worldwide.

In addition to the HybRED product release, Red Box International has seen continued growth in its existing product lines, with the range of lithium start units becoming increasingly popular.

"I can add that we saw an increase in sales into the Asia Pacific region, notably to China. We've never had a sizeable presence in China. However, since the relaxation of the ban on the usage of low altitude airspace and the appointment of a hardworking, countrybased distributor, Red Box's presence in China has grown substantially and it is now a recognised brand in the general aviation industry in China.

"One customer of note has been that of Regional Express in Australia. Regional Express contacted Red Box about finding a solution to support its fleet of Q400 Dash 8 aircraft on the ramp. Because of the location of the aircraft, electrical power wasn't always available, and as such, an independent power source was required. This highlighted the suitability of the Red Box HybRED 170/6: this unit, with the engine running, can provide up to 170 amps continuously at 28VDC. This allowed the aircraft to perform all the required pre-flight checks in confidence before take-off.

"Red Box International offers one of the most comprehensive product ranges in the DC ground power market and as a result, this has seen our customer base expand significantly over recent years. Combine this with Red Box's engineering ability and it allows us to offer tailor-made solutions to meet customer demand.

"Looking forward to 2015, Red Box has some exciting developments, including the release of several new products, details of which will be announced in due course."



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The Standard





An artist's impression of the new perishable cargo facility to be run by AISATS

Cool operator

Perishable cargo facilities are making strides in India, if a recent project is anything to go by.

ir India SATS Airport Services (AISATS) held a ground-breaking ceremony for Bengaluru's first fully dedicated perishable cargo handling centre, the AISATS Coolport, at Kempegowda International airport on March 3. The event was inaugurated by Kaushik Mukherjee, Honorable Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka, and was in line with the vision of enhancing the State of Karnataka as the Pharmaceutical, Biotechnology and Perishable hub of India.

A noteworthy distinction of this facility is the provision of 135 kVA power supply for its operations, which is achieved through the expedient of solar energy: this represents a first for an air freight terminal in India. Once completed, this exclusive 40,000 tonne AISATS Coolport facility will cater to a wide range of commodities such as pharmaceutical products, fruits, vegetables and flowers. The facility will be equipped with a drug controller lab testing facility, a separate ripening zone, landside truck docks, warehousing and re-distribution centres as well as cold room facilities with different temperature zones and a testing facility as per Plant Quarantine requirements for EU and US-bound shipments. In addition, the state-of-the-art building will also have humidity control and temperature monitoring facilities.

Increase in perishables cargo

In recent years there has been a substantial increase in perishable cargo handling volumes. Since 2010, AISATS Bengaluru has witnessed a year-on-year increase in compound annual growth rate of 37.9%. This maiden project is expected to create more jobs for the local community in the process. AISATS also aims to develop a training facility for vocational courses to handle pharmaceutical, biotechnology and perishable products as per specific requirements for its employees.

AISATS' Bengaluru Airfreight Terminal has also received its Good Distribution Practices certification for handling pharmaceutical products. With GDP certification and the AISATS Coolport, AISATS is again demonstrating its commitment not only towards providing world class and best in class industryrecognised quality standards in every aspect of its facilities and services, but also in playing its part in the environment. AISATS' customers can be assured of strict compliance by AISATS with the GDP requirements set out by the World Health Organisation for the handling of pharmaceutical products.

"The proposed Perishable Handling Centre facility is being established under ASIDE (Assistance to States for Infrastructure Development for Exports & Allied Activities) scheme of the Government of India. Since the inception, Karnataka has been recognised as the Best Performing State in the implementation of ASIDE scheme and 120 projects have been taken up under the ASIDE scheme in our State. The Government of Karnataka, having realised the importance of having a welldeveloped infrastructure for exporters of perishable commodities from the State, has agreed to support AISATS in establishing a Perishable Handling Centre. The facility would serve as a catalyst, providing impetus for international trade and will help the exporters from the State in reducing their transaction costs while

enhancing their competitiveness in the international market," commented a spokesperson from the Department of Industries & Commerce, Karnataka.

The need for adequate infrastructure

Speaking on the occasion, Willy Ko, CEO, AISATS said: "Many of us in the air freight industry have been speaking out on the need to have adequate infrastructure to support the ambitious plan by the Government to promote and grow the air cargo industry in India. It is indisputable that India will have tremendous growth potential in its air cargo sector, especially with the Made In India initiative launched by the Government. However, adequate infrastructure, while important, is not enough. The infrastructure needs to be planned and designed to suit the operations to achieve the objectives. This means going beyond merely providing a piece of land for air cargo within the airport building plans. Such air cargo facilities need to be properly planned, designed and situated to facilitate and encourage growth, especially for hub operations. Experienced and professional operators should be selected to run the facilities. BIAL, with the strong support of the Karnataka Government, did just that. The AISATS Air Freight Terminal and the upcoming AISATS Coolport are well planned, designed and located to further enhance its capability to handle the expected increase in air cargo throughput, especially perishables and pharmaceutical products. We are very happy and honoured that AISATS is selected to partner the Government of Karnataka to fulfill its vision of turning Kempegowda airport into a preferred air cargo hub in South India. We are confident and determined that we will make a difference."

"The region, with its established presence in the global logistics network, has the potential to create the necessary fillip towards the development of air cargo in India. As an airport that is strategically positioned in the heart of South India, we have the opportunity to take advantage of this momentum and be the single gateway for cargo traffic and shippers aspiring to reach this fast-growing region. Today, the ground breaking ceremony of the Perishable Cargo Handling Centre at AISATS is a validation that our partners are in sync with our commitment and continue to explore new ways for seamless cargo operations. We firmly believe new logistics that redefine the cargo business will propel us closer to our vision of being the Cargo Gateway to

South India," added G V Sanjay Reddy, Managing Director, BIAL.

The New Industrial Policy 2014-19, which was announced recently, comes with an attractive package of incentives and concessions to encourage the manufacturing sectors and to boost the agricultural sector through value addition. The policy envisages building a prosperous Karnataka through inclusive, sustainable and balanced industrial development, thereby creating large scale employment opportunities and providing a conducive environment to enhance the ease of doing business in the State. The policy definitely assists the agricultural sector towards value addition and helps it to tap the huge potential available globally.

The key objectives of the policy aim at sustaining an industrial growth rate of over 12% per annum while enhancing the contribution of the manufacturing sector to the State GDP: this, it is hoped, will rise from the current level of 16.87% to 20% by the end of the policy period.

The Pharmaceutical Policy 2012 announced by the Karnataka State Government is expected to create a



(L-r) P Mahenthiran, Senior Vice President, Bengaluru & Mangaluru - AISATS; Gaurav Gupta, Commissioner (Industrial Development) & Director Industries & Commerce Department Government Of Karnataka; Willy Ko, CEO, AISATS; Kaushik Mukherjee, Honourable Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka; K Ratna Prabha, Additional Chief Secretary Commerce & Industries Development, Government of Karnataka; Sandeep Prakash, Commissioner Customs, Bengaluru; Ronald Yeo, Senior VP, Cargo Services SATS and K S Shivaswamy, MD, VTPC at the AISATS ground breaking ceremony for Bengaluru's first fully dedicated perishable cargo handling centre

favourable regulatory environment, attracting more investment in pharmaceutical, biotechnology and related sectors in the state.

The forthcoming AISATS Coolport facility will provide the required infrastructure to boost the movement of goods whilst enhancing the efficient handling of perishable products, including both the agricultural and pharmaceutical sectors, by creating sufficient storage capacity, minimising wastage and creating operational cost efficiencies through innovative solutions using modern and environmentallyfriendly equipment.



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1st LATAM Ground Handling International Conference 22-24 September 2015, Hyatt Regency, Miami



Building on over 20 years of international conference experience in the aviation industry, this new event will specifically target the LATAM region and address regional issues that the growing ground handling industry faces. High level presentations and a discussion panel covering relevant global events are also lined up for this event.

We already have support and commitment from some of the region's leading ground handling companies, airlines and service providers and it is essential that the content of this first conference addresses the needs of this growing market sector.

But what makes a GHI event special is the personally organised One-to-One meetings that we will organise for you - a service that is all part of your delegate fee. We will arrange and confirm your meetings in co-ordination with you and your schedule and provide individual meeting rooms for your meetings. This is what makes a GHI event stand out from the crowd. At the recent annual GHI conference over 2,500 One-to-One meetings were individually arranged for the delegates.

TOPICS INCLUDE...

- The challenges working with the privatised airport sector - cost vs. facilities and existing infrastructure constraints
- Labour availability and cost: is it possible to deliver a quality service to airlines despite continually disrupted service schedules?
- The need to understand and negotiate the right SLAs every time
- Safety on the ramp understanding human factors
- Ground handling services one size doesn't fit all airlines
- Cargo handling improving the handling flow
- Regulating the ramp how will the new regulations affect your business?
- A financial overview of what the region offers now and in the future

The conference will be staged at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Miami that offers fantastic guest rooms and conference facilities. We have negotiated a special room rate for our delegates, so make sure you book soon to take advantage of these special deals.

Don't miss out on the opportunity to be part of this ground-breaking conference and take advantage of the 12% Early Bird discount on offer now!

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• Emirates and Aviance Ghana have concluded a three year contract renewal that will allow the African handler to properly invest in staff training, safety and new equipment.

• National Aviation Services has reached a new milestone in its expansion with its first contract award in West Africa. With the new contract, NAS has now expanded its operational network to 16 stations in nine countries. Under the ten year contract and on an exclusivity basis, NAS will provide ground handling services at the Felix Houphouet-Boigny International airport in Abidian as part of a public private partnership with the Government of Côte d'Ivoire. NAS was awarded the contract based on its proven track record and the solutions proposed to turn the airport back to a regional hub as it was in the past. The ground handling contract includes passenger services, ramp handling, cargo management and warehousing, as well as other related airport services.

• Havas Saudi Arabia, the first Turkish company with a ground handling

services licence in Saudi Arabia, has begun providing its services in Medina as part of Pegasus Airlines' Umrah operations included in its service network. Havas will render ground handling services for approximately 200 charter flights that Pegasus will launch to Medina for the Umrah operations.

• TCR continues to nuture the growth of GSE renting. In the wake of its massive expansion into 15 airports across Norway in 2014, TCR has recently started renting GSE at three Swedish airports, namely Arlanda, Gothenburg and Malmo. The deal embraces over 1,200 pieces of equipment in all, and includes 25 staff along with three workshops: operations started up on February 1. By adding these three stations to its network, TCR's presence now exceeds 70 airports, in which it manages a total of over 20,000 pieces of GSE.

• Worldwide Flight Services recently signed a co-operative agreement with ATA Italia to provide jointly the latter's total ground handling solutions for airlines in Italy. The agreement will enable the two companies to market their respective cargo, ramp and passenger handling services in the country's major airports. ATA Italia currently operates from five locations, namely Milan Malpensa, Rome Fiumicino, Milan Linate, Venezia and Catania, and serves some 50 international carriers, including Air France-KLM, British Airways, Delta Air Lines, easyJet, Emirates, Iberia and US Airways.

The agreement was signed by WFS' President and Chief Executive, Olivier Bijaoui and the President of ATA Italia, Mario Sisto.

In addition to passenger and baggage handling and ramp services, WFS also provides station supervision and administration, aircraft servicing and cleaning, surface transport for passengers and crew, flight operations and crew assistance and load control, along with ULD control and management.

• In March, Groundforce signed up Etihad Airways Madrid for full handling. Also in March, the handler contracted with Lufthansa for its operation in Seville. Finally, commencing April 24, Groundforce will supply full handling to Chalair Aviation at all Groundforce stations.





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Chinese Whispers

■ María Díaz León, Safety Officer at Groundforce, wants to see an increase in reporting which, she believes, will lead to a much safer workplace.

hinese Whispers is a children's game that is played around the world. Players have fun listening to a message which gradually becomes distorted when it is whispered through a line of people, until the last receiver transmits the final message. This final statement usually differs significantly from the first one, as a result of a number of things, including misunderstanding during the communication, a lack of concentration or the complexity of the message itself.

But is this just a children's game? Definitely not.

It is real life. We witness examples of ineffective communication in everyday life, as well as in the ground handling industry. We work hard to update processes and procedures according to national regulations. We incorporate internationally best-recommended practices (for example the ISAGO Standards Manual or IGOM) and we look to improve both quality and safety standards. So, then, does all this mean that ground operations are safer? Well, personally, I guess it depends on how all this information is communicated to the personnel.

Consider the chain for a moment: Station Manager, Safety Manager, Operations Manager, Ramp Manager, Duty Officers, Red Caps, Ramp Leaders, Supervisors... and finally, the Ramp Agents. Successfully transmitting information through the hierarchical pyramid is not an easy task. At some point, the chain will fail, just as it does in Chinese Whispers. Insisting on training and safety promotion is the only way to ensure that changes and updates of procedures are transmitted and, most importantly, are understood and implemented.

In 2014, three new courses were added to the training programme for the Ramp Area and the Turnaround Co-ordination Area at Groundforce's Madrid station: these were Reporting Culture, Co-ordination of Airside Activities, and Planning and Decision Making. They were introduced in order to improve the working environment in the airside area, to promote teamwork and to enhance both quality and safety requirements. The collaboration and comprehension between the areas is vital to ensure an on-time operation, while taking into account all safety standards.

After analysing the results obtained, I would say we are on the right track towards achieving those goals. The effects on the Madrid station have been really positive, so in 2015 these courses have been included in the training programme for all Groundforce stations.

Consequently, we are now seeing a notable increase in the number of occurrence reports registered in our database. We have doubled, even tripled the entries in some months, and the typology of notifications is changing as well. Our staff are not only focused on communicating incidents with serious consequences, such as personnel injuries or material damage, for instance, but they are also paying attention to every deviation from the operational procedures that they observe during the turnaround.

Of course, this wide assortment of reports is a valuable source of information. The notifications are the beginning of incident investigations and safety event studies that will contribute to the improvement of ground operations performance. Additionally, they are an essential tool to develop and encourage the risk management system, identifying safety issues and risk areas before an incident occurs.

We have noticed a significant improvement related to the implementation of safety procedures and SMS effectiveness. But the main questions are these: what do the personnel think about it? Do they feel safe on the ramp? Do they consider that reporting is useful? What do they think about the analysis of the data that they notify? Is safety training helpful? And what about safety promotion (bulletins, briefings and the like)? Is it enough? Let's ask them.

At the end of every season we look forward to the results of our customer surveys. We want to know the level of customer satisfaction that we have obtained. This time, we are also going to receive information on the satisfaction of our personnel regarding safety. The staff can complete the surveys voluntarily during or after the training, so they can freely express their opinions and give feedback anonymously.

This initiative was launched in January. In the first quarter, the level



of participation in the surveys reached 75%. Besides the information provided with regard to the level of safety in every station, the remarks from the surveys have provided us with plenty of ideas for promoting safety and improving communication. For example, one of the proposals is to produce a dynamic Power Point version of safety bulletins to be shown on the screens in the ramp rest areas. Maybe it is time to replace the typical bulletins, making the message easier...

It is necessary to keep concentrating our efforts on training and safety promotion, which are the keys to ensuring that the communication channel works. By introducing new ideas and methodologies in training and safety promotion, we are able to catch the attention of the personnel. Ultimately, the more we simplify the message, the easier it is to understand and therefore implement.

Extra baggage spotted before take-off procedures

During the walkaround inspection, a clipboard was found wedged between the rear bulkhead and the nosewheel landing gear shock strut trunnion of an aircraft awaiting departure. Photographs were subsequently taken and kept on file before the clipboard was removed and the area inspected; no damage was found. It transpired that the clipboard in guestion belonged to a supervisor assisting with the pushback of the flight. He had put it there whilst assisting in hooking up the towbar, had then become distracted and consequently failed to remove it prior to inspection.

Packed intact?

In this instance a damaged ULD, which contained a dangerous goods shipment, was loaded on to an aircraft in error. As part of the EASA-ops audit on the flight, the ULD was identified as being damaged and containing the said goods. However, strange to relate, the auditor failed to take any action or prevent the defective ULD from travelling, despite his knowledge of the contravention. Furthermore, the damage was also missed during the loading process. The auditor did not speak to the crew leader nor request the ULD's removal from the flight.

After the event, the loading line manager checked with the crew leader to ensure familiarity with the fit-to-fly process. Curiously enough, post-build up photographs revealed no obvious damage on the ULD in question and indeed, the fit-to-fly counter signatory confirmed that the ULD was passed before having the freight added to it. The causes of the ULD damage were not ascertained.

On board weight gain unwelcome

Weight and balance, as every handler knows, can be a critical factor when turning an aircraft. After several (unsuccessful) attempts to speak with a ground services provider or turnaround co-ordinator, handlers offloaded the mail from an overloaded flight in order to make space for passenger bags. After the doors had closed, the co-ordinator provided the local load control department with the final loading details, which included a total of three jump seat passengers. However, when clearing the flight, the local load controller omitted to include the information regarding the jump seat passengers. Upon arrival at the office, the co-ordinator noticed the missing information and called the CLC. Once the trio of jump seat passengers were added to the flight (which was already airborne), the flight was found to be overloaded by 43 kilogrammes.

Clearly, the CLC should have been made aware of the changes to the load by the ground staff.

Mystery tour for a PRM

Despite the high tech age in which we live, it is still possible for the systems in place to let us down. More precisely, the said systems will only function properly if the correct protocols are followed. We're back to Reason's Swiss Cheese model here, for once those holes start to line up, so events begin to unfold. This was highlighted quite recently when a passenger was incorrectly boarded.

The traveller was, in fact, a PRM and was taking an afternoon flight. PRM assistance was deployed and the passenger was duly taken to the correct gate. However, the lady in question was then transferred by shuttle to an incorrect flight, which was also on a remote stand. Unfortunately, the cabin crew did not check the passenger's boarding pass when she was delivered and the passenger was subsequently seated on the flight. The flight also took off without any headcount performed, taking the passenger to an incorrect destination.

Given that there are several checks to perform before any passenger is boarded, it is vital that procedures are followed. The PRM slipped through the net by virtue of the fact that she was not boarded with the main body of passengers. All the more reason, perhaps, that those boarding separately are thoroughly checked on the way.



When words simply aren't enough on the ramp

Some while back we carried a feature in this magazine on the importance of communication in the aviation business, in particular the use of English at a proficient level. Our next incident, which occurred in a US station, highlights the relevance of this facet of the ramp operation.

In this instance the aircraft was over-fuelled by 6,400 kilogrammes. The requested fuel level was that of 54,000 kilogrammes, but this was misunderstood by the refueller, who proceeded to upload 64,000 kilogrammes. Luckily, an engineer realised that the aircraft was being over-fuelled and managed to stop the refuelling procedure at 60,400 kilogrammes. There ensued a delay of ten minutes while a new loadsheet had to be obtained. There was a further delay to the take-off while the crew awaited the final figures because of the late loadsheet change.

It was subsequently noted in the report that communication (including language problems) between the various parties had been an ongoing issue since the handling operation at the station had been outsourced.

Ambulift gets into a scrape

In this episode, the port winglet of an Embraer 175 came into contact with an ambulift vehicle.

Whilst reversing away from the L2 door, the nearside upper section of the body touched the aircraft's winglet. Only slight contact was made between the vehicle and the aircraft but it was sufficient to remove the paint from both points of contact. As it happened, the banksman was actually positioned on the offside of the vehicle as the reversing manoeuvre commenced, and so he did not see the impact until he moved to a more central position. By this time the vehicle had travelled a couple of metres whilst touching with the winglet. Fortunately, no remedial repairs were required and there were no passengers inconvenienced. Once again, an example of what can happen when the right person isn't quite in the right place at the right time.

Beltloader fire findings made public at last

Whilst we don't tend to report names and places in these pages, nonetheless it is perhaps pertinent to recall an incident in Canada from a couple of years back.

In early February the Transportation Safety Board of Canada released its investigation report into the beltloader fire involving a B767 operated by Royal Air Maroc at Montréal-Pierre Elliott Trudeau International airport, in November 2013. The fire led to smoke in the cabin and the subsequent evacuation of passengers.

The Royal Air Maroc B767, carrying 243 passengers and eight crew members, parked at gate 61 after landing. During deplaning at 16.45, a fire broke out under a beltloader that was positioned under the left rear cargo door. The smell of smoke created by the fire penetrated the cabin, prompting the captain to order the evacuation of the aircraft. Some passengers evacuated the aircraft through the jetway while others used the evacuation slides. Subsequently, seven passengers suffered minor injuries. The airport firefighting service arrived on site at 16.49 and brought the fire under control; fortunately, the aircraft itself sustained no damage.

The investigation found that a connector in the fuel system on the beltloader had become disconnected while the engine was running. Consequently, fuel had sprayed on to the hot surface of the exhaust and caused a fire.

In the weeks following the occurrence, all of the service provider's beltloaders at airports across Canada had the connectors in their fuel systems inspected. Additionally, emergency switches were fitted to beltloaders that did not already have such devices. The handler also shared its observations with other service providers concerning the risks associated with the vulnerability of the fuel system for this engine model on ground handling equipment. Aéroports de Montréal has since incorporated service providers (such as ground handlers) with their safety management system, and its firefighting service now offers training to employees working on the apron.

Wheels within wheels

The correct securing and loading of ULDs is of paramount importance if a cargo is to arrive safely at its destination. What can go wrong when these actions are glossed over is exemplified in the following case, which occurred recently in the UK.

The instance involved the arrival of an A380, which had four cargo containers on board. On opening the hold it became obvious that one container required re-packing before it could be offloaded: that took five people in all to effect, and another container had to be secured before this operation could be executed. Two of the containers held aircraft wheels that were supposed to have been secured yet, on examination, were loose, and which had moved around within their respective containers, causing light damage.

Moreover, the trolley that was supporting the single wheel did not fit its container properly and the wheels of that trolley had rolled out of the container en route, and had become wedged, which hampered the efforts of operatives when they tried to manoeuvre the container itself. In fact, one of the crew stated in his report that he came close to damaging the hold floor in performing these activities, and that he had almost broken one of the wheels off this trolley whilst unloading.

Clearly, a lot of extra effort and care was necessitated in this offload, effort that need not have been expended had the handlers at the departure airport done their job properly in the first place.

Miles more from Miles

UK-based Miles Aviation Consulting has announced that it has recently introduced some new ground operations training courses to its portfolio. Courses for front line staff now include aircraft loading supervision; aircraft turnaround co-ordination; basic ground and ramp operations as well as basic load control aircraft weight & balance.

Switching to the management side, Miles Aviation now offers airport & station management and a course on cost-efficient ground operations, together with a ground and ramp operation course for managers.

De-icer failure a mystery

To conclude our safety pages, we publish here the findings of an enquiry that was carried out following a deicer incident at GDN Airport Services in 2013. Although nothing concrete has been established following the investigation into the failure of the rig, it nonetheless may serve as a reminder to those involved in de-icing that checks and maintenance are critical with this type of GSE.

On the day of the failure the conditions were snowy and there was a light prevailing wind. The de-icer proper was manufactured by Haenlein and was an EISBAR II version. The boom itself had been supplied by Ruthman and was a type K-125, which had been constructed in 1988. In the incident, the boom itself unaccountably sagged, just ahead of the lower hydraulic assembly, as can be seen from the attached images. The de-icer boom was subsequently laboratory



Collapsed boom remains a mystery...

tested but no corrosion or fatigue was detected. Likewise, the mechanisms were laboratory checked yet no malfunctions were discovered. It was further established that there had been no human error in the unit's operation, nor indeed any procedural errors in the activity of the de-icer. Fortunately, the



... but fortunately there were no casualties in this alarming incident

operator suffered no injury

In conclusion, the National Technical Supervision Board stated that the root cause was not ascertainable. As far as is known, only 20 units of this type were sold worldwide: if any reader is aware of one in use, it would be advisable to have additional tests carried out. Got an incident or a safety-related story to share with the industry? Simply write to the Editor: **alwyn@groundhandling.com**



4th Ground Damage Stakeholders' Meeting 29-30 June 2015, London Heathrow

Day One: 29th June 2015

0730 - 0930 Registration & breakfast in Sheraton Skyline Hotel, London Heathrow

0930 - 0945 Chairman's welcome

0945 - 1045 Conference presentations and Q&A

• Learning from other industries

- Human Factors
- Training is not Learning
- 1045 1130 Coffee break & networking
- 1130 1300 Conference presentations, open debate and Q&A

• Interactive open debate on current working conditions on the ramp and how to improve them

1300 - 1400 Lunch & networking

1400 - 1430 Bus transfer to airside, London Heathrow Airport

1430 - 1730 Live turnaround filming and safety demonstrations on the ramp

1730 - 1745 Bus transfer to Sheraton Skyline Hotel

1745 - 1930 At delegates' leisure

1930 - 2200 Delegate Gala Dinner

Day Two: 30th June 2015

0800 - 0930 Breakfast in Sheraton Skyline Hotel

0930 - 0940 Chairman's introduction to Day Two

0940 - 1000 IGOM: is it delivering the goods?

1000 - 1115 Open debate and discussion based on the ramp turnaround film and demonstrations

• The real world on the ramp – understanding the work and the workforce

1115 - 1140 Coffee break & networking

1140 - 1230 Open debate and discussion based on the ramp turnaround film and demonstrations - conclusions

1230 - 1245 Morning wrap-up

1245 - 1400 Lunch & networking

1400 - 1530 Concluding presentations and open debate

1600 Close of the event. Bus transfer to LHR Terminals and Sheraton Skyline Hotel

Turnaround time

Are you up to speed?

At this year's Ground Damage Stakeholders' Meeting we will be putting delegates' ramp knowledge to the test.

A turnaround operation will be recorded on film with a view to replaying the sequence of events to the audience.

Will *you* be able to spot the errors and mistakes? Was there anything that *you* would have done differently?

You will need to have your wits about you if you are to achieve that On Time Performance statistic...

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Denge PRM vehicle employs Italian technology

Oerlikon Drive Systems, with its brand Oerlikon Graziano, now features its PST transmission on an award-winning airport transfer vehicle.

This latest application highlights the versatility and robustness of the PST transmission, which has previously been widely used in the forklift truck market.

"The flexibility and durability of the PST transmission unit, plus its availability off-the-shelf, makes it a reliable and cost-effective choice for specialist airport ground equipment such as tow tractors, baggage tractors, beltloaders, passenger steps and lavatory vehicles," declares Paolo Ramadori, Chairman and CEO of Oerlikon Graziano. "Being an industrial design, it provides a higher working performance, greater reliability and a longer service life than alternative automotive transmissions."

The PST transmission features on the Dengelift SD5804, a self-propelled disabled passenger transfer vehicle manufactured by Denge Airport Equipment, that won an innovation award in the category interRAMP at the last InterAirport Europe. The SD5804 is capable of lifting a payload of 1,000 kilogrammes to a height of 5.8 metres when stationary and has a maximum speed of 30 kilometres per hour.

Oerlikon Graziano PST transmission is available in two configurations with different ratings: the Dengelift makes use of the PST2 derivative. This twin forward/reverse speed unit suits forklift trucks with up to an 8 tonne capacity and ground support equipment with anything up to a 60,000 Newton drawbar pull.

In contrast, a single speed, forward/ reverse PST1 is supplied for forklift trucks of up to 4 tonnes capacity and ground equipment with up to 25,000 Newton drawbar pull. Both transmissions are suitable for engine speeds of 2,800rpm and ground speeds up to 25 kilometres per hour, and can be supplied with an optional power take off, delivering 50bhp at 2,200rpm through a choice of standard output flanges, including both DIN and SAE.

"Thanks to the wide product configuration and reliability record," Paolo Ramadori continues, "we constantly have new applications such as trenchers, cranes and railway service equipment. Because we work closely with customers, from the earliest concept stage of their design process, we can help them to reach an optimal overall design, while using a costeffective and well proven product."

New tractor offers engine choices to customer

In February, TLD launched its new cargo tractor, the JCT-40/60. The JCT is designed for baggage handling tasks as well as the towing of heavy cargo. Thanks to its high drawbar pull (up to 4500 daN) it can also be used to push small/medium aircraft. The JCT is a tractor developed to convey cargo safely over long distances at a maximum speed of 30 kilometres per hour, and in conditions of outstanding comfort for the operator. It comes complete with adjustable, suspended seats for the driver/co-driver, as well as a fully instrumented control panel.

The JCT series will offer two engine versions: 56 and 75 kW. Each of these is designed to meet two emission standards, namely Tier III and Tier IV F.

Go lightly!

Over the past decade there has been a steep decline in air cargo volumes worldwide, largely through the rapid rise in fuel costs, which has affected air cargo carriers much more dramatically than other, more fuel-efficient modes of transport. Containerised air cargo declined from 3.1% in 2000 to 1.7% in 2013, according to research by The International Air Transport Association.

Jim Hardisty, Managing Director of Goplasticpallets.com, commented on the statistics. "Exporters transporting large volumes of goods by air need to look for new ways to take costs out of the supply chain. Pallets are indispensable for shipping goods by road, sea and air, yet few export companies are aware of the sheer variety of pallets suitable for export on the market and how using certain types and models can achieve considerable cost efficiencies.

"Our ultra-low weight, high performance EXA 1210 export pallet is a prime example. It offers the strength of a full perimeter pallet but weighs just 7.3 kilogrammes, helping keep airfreight costs to a minimum.

"Its lightweight design has made it a favourite with Japanese drinks and chemicals importers; in fact our EXA 1210 export pallet is used for all the Beaujolais Nouveau, which is shipped from France to Japan by air."

High loader acquisition by On Air Dining operation

On Air Dining, the elite culinary service that provides a fine dining experience in the air, is enhancing its offering to clients with the introduction of a high loader catering vehicle, designed to easily and efficiently deliver food directly into the galleys of wide bodied VIP aircraft. On Air Dining took delivery of the 7.5 tonne, temperaturecontrolled IVECO halfcab high loader at the end of February. The business also has options for a further two vehicles on a leased basis from the beginning of the summer.

"We are increasingly serving larger business jets and are building up our facilities and chef resources in readiness to offer a planned round-the-clock service later in the spring. This high loader will be extremely valuable in this regard. The new equipment will enable the On Air Dining team to deliver food to these jets efficiently, whilst reducing the amount of external handling. Importantly, we will be in control of the food, from order acceptance to delivery. This will help us ensure the dishes arrive on board at their freshest, with minimal handling," explained Daniel Hulme, CEO of On Air Dining.

In addition to supporting the growing wide-body aircraft sector, On Air Dining is beginning to serve the inflight catering needs of VIP commercial airliner and *ad hoc* charters that are typically served by B767 to B737 aircraft. The new equipment will bolster this offering at Stansted and serve to further improve the offering to this expanding part of the business.

Specialist equipment available from the Antipodes

Based in New Zealand, Fieldair Engineering is constantly designing and building a wide range of innovative GSE, which is normally aimed at the aviation sector. Recently, however, the company responded to a call for tanker access stairs in order to assist one of New Zealand's dairy companies meet its Health and Safety requirements.

In this particular application, the upper section slots and pins into place, allowing the operator to cantilever out sideways from the main stairs; that said, in most cases the main stair is used on its own. A full set of conformable, removable guard rails is supplied with the unit.

The company's Alan Peacock reports that 2014 was a busy year for the manufacturer, which saw it supply some innovative equipment throughout Australia, the South Pacific and New Zealand. We will be featuring the company's innovative work in a future issue of this magazine.

WFS relies on Rushlift

Ground support and materials handling equipment provider Rushlift has supplied a new fleet of equipment for Worldwide Flight Services at Manchester airport.

Over £2.8m worth of equipment was needed in less than two months, and involved over 110 units of varied specialist ground support equipment that would typically take at least three times that long to source. Rushlift's Brian Grady says that the ability to respond quickly was a key component of the deal.

"Ground support means having the right equipment at the right location and to be able to respond to the demands of an industry that has severe penalties for delays," he explains.

"From our first conversation to the first delivery took just eight weeks. In that time we dealt with over a dozen different suppliers to get their best possible production times and ensure the equipment was delivered on time."

WFS is already familiar with the Rushlift approach, having relied on the MHE side of the business to provide support at its Heathrow operation.

"The attraction of going with Rushlift GSE," adds WFS's Gary Jenkins, "was their understanding of our business aims. From our perspective, we needed equipment fast, but we also needed it to be capable and reliable. Our experience with them to date had given us an insight into their business ethos and we were delighted with the way they rose to the challenge."

The skills of Rushlift's sister company, Specialist Crane Hire, were also brought to bear, with the delivery of a Trepel wide body pallet and container high loader. The loader made the long journey from Wiesbaden, near Frankfurt, to Manchester, where it was off-loaded using the latest mobile crane equipment.

"As a full service rental, maintenance and asset management business, we maintain and manage a wide variety of equipment," affirmed Rushlift's Executive Chairman, Peter Cosgrove.

"Our GSE operation follows similar business rhythms as our existing businesses, meaning we bring a wealth of experience and expertise to a sector that has yearned for modernisation. By responding quickly and professionally, we gave WFS the confidence they needed to move forward with their ambitious plans."

"Whatever the equipment, whatever the circumstances, our priorities remain the same," adds Brian Grady, "a safe and timely aircraft departure.

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portfolio, chances are, if it's meant to move, Rushlift are already keeping it moving. We do not restrict our thinking when it comes to what is and isn't considered GSE. We are driven by our customers' needs and we will source any equipment necessary to get the job done."

Big PCA orders for Cavotec

Engineering group Cavotec has been awarded two big orders for its innovative Sub-freezing DX-Boost pre-conditioned air technology for cooling aircraft at the Presidential Flight Hangar at Abu Dhabi International airport, as well as at the Oman Air MRO facility at Muscat International airport.

The Abu Dhabi International order is a turnkey project, which will see the Group design, supply, install, test and commission the Sub-freezing DX-Boost PCA system, 400Hz converters, pop-up pit and hatch pit systems.

The second order is for the supply of Sub-freezing DX-Boost PCA units and pop-up systems for PCA and 400Hz, and includes an additional number of hatch pit systems for other services, all of which are earmarked for Muscat International.

"These landmark projects are excellent references for our Sub-freezing DX-Boost cooling technology, and further demonstrates our ability to offer all the necessary technical expertise to deliver complex turnkey solutions to major industry players," commented Ottonel Popesco, Cavotec's CEO.

Cavotec INET's Sub-freezing DX-Boost systems cool aircraft quickly and efficiently by supplying PCA at subzero temperatures. The technology meets the strict criteria and demanding environmental conditions of both Muscat airport and Abu Dhabi airport, where temperatures frequently exceed 45°C. DX-boost PCA units enable the fast and efficient cooling of aircraft without the use of on-board auxiliary power units, thereby reducing emissions.

Cavotec recently commissioned an example of its cooling system at the Boeing MRO Facility Nagpur in India. This project was something of an industry benchmark with Cavotec's application delivering pre-conditioned dry air at temperatures lower than -10°C at the Boeing MRO hangar. It should be noted that the supplier has worked closely with the likes of Airbus and other aircraft manufacturers for many years in developing advanced GSE.

A long-standing relationship with Larsen and Toubro has added another highlight, with Cavotec recently having been awarded the contract to supply 108 electrical and 400Hz pit systems for the prestigious Midfield Terminal Project at Abu Dhabi International.

These recent projects at Muscat airport and Abu Dhabi airport build on a sequence of orders awarded to the Group over the past few months. These include an order from Airbus in the US, where Cavotec will supply a complete 400Hz electrical power supply system, including converters, distribution boards and pit systems, for the aircraft manufacturer's new production facility in Mobile, Alabama. Additionally in the US, Cavotec will supply a number of 400Hz electric power supply units for Chicago O'Hare's Terminal 5 development.

Cavotec has also been awarded an order with Chinese aircraft manufacturer, Shanxi, for a number of pit systems and related matériel for a final assembly line. Also in China, the Group has been awarded a major project with Hainan Airlines to supply 16 utility pit systems for the airline's maintenance hangar at Haikou airport on Hainan Island.

Finally, for the first phase of a new development at Moscow Domodedovo airport, Cavotec is supplying 19 hydrant pits along with related vault access covers and high/low-point pit systems.

FAME, not blame

Regular readers will know that the use of biodiesel in ground transport has been growing proportionately over the last few years. With that trend, though, has come a headache for jet fuel suppliers and aero engine manufacturers.

Quite often the two fuels are transported in the same multi-product pipeline and distribution systems, which contributes to cross-contamination. Biodiesel is made up of a bio-component called FAME (Fatty Acid Methyl Ester), traces of which can adhere to pipe and tank walls as the biodiesel passes through. These traces can then be released through the passage of the following product, which can of course be jet fuel. If adsorbed in enough concentrations, FAME can impact the thermal stability and freezing point of jet fuel, which could result in engine operability problems and possible engine flame-out.

Up till now, the maximum FAME contamination in jet fuel was set at 5 parts per million (ppm) but after a number of years of research and testing by fuel and engine experts, fuel certification body ASTM raised that limit to 50 ppm.

FAME itself derives from vegetable oils, animal fats or waste cooking oils through a process known as transesterification, in which a glyceride reacts with an alcohol in the presence of a catalyst to form a mixture of fatty acids esters as well as an alcohol. What's interesting in this context is that FAME, in chemical terms, is quite a different molecule compared to those found in jet fuel. Further, FAME also has a very variable composition, and is certainly not manufactured to aerospace standards.

All the while that fuel is transported through pipelines (as opposed to bowsers), the two liquids are going to come into contact with one another. However, all the while pipeline transportation remains the cheaper option, that scenario seems unlikely to alter.

But are industry analysts over reacting? Tests have shown that jet fuel quality was not impaired when an incidence of 400 ppm of biodiesel were registered, which is much higher than the working "safe" limit of 5ppm.

If the jury is out on that one, then remember that there are other contenders, waiting in the wings. Notable amongst these is green diesel which, the experts say, has much to commend it.

Greener taxi-ing?

One might be forgiven for thinking that, with the advent of the electric pushback tractor and developments such as the TaxiBot, that there was little scope left for innovation. However, that is clearly not the case. A small engineering office, that of anyTRACS, was actually founded in 2008 with the aim of developing and commercialising the jetTRACS system.

Two people, Andreas Becker and Eckhard Bergerhoff, first discussed the idea of an alternative procedure to an aircraft taxi-ing out under its own power in 2007; a patent was applied for in the following year.

The idea behind jetTRACS is both the conservation of fuel and the reduction of CO_2 during the taxi-ing procedure. As readers know, airlines benefit most by saving fuel costs when they can reduce the run time of aircraft engines. Allied to this is the fact that airports have to provide a large number of towing vehicles for carrier use. With this in mind, the pair added another goal, that of finding a solution that would allow airports to participate in, and benefit from, the advantages of a completely different towing system.

Compared to other systems, jetTRACS includes a hybrid drivetrain, so it is basically possible to operate the system without fossil fuels, which translates into zero emissions.

But there is more to this innovation: the fully automated jetTRACS system eliminates the human factor during the pushback and taxi-ing processes, and thus has the potential to avoid the incidence of accidents that can occur during this tricky ramp procedure.
BA grime scene investigation

ritish Airways has apologised to former BBC and CNN presenter, Owen Thomas, following his complaints about the filthy state of his first-class seat on a flight to St Lucia earlier this month. Owen took to Twitter with video footage of the grimy compartment, which evidenced stains on the wall and a thick build-up of dirt around the seat, wittily dubbing the cabin "filth class." According to the BA website, first-class seats on flights to the Caribbean can cost up to £9,000 in peak season, and Owen said he had saved money and air miles devotedly to purchase the flights.

"This is nothing short of corporate greed. They took our money - lots of it and clearly can't give a damn about their customers, whether they're in first or economy," he commented.

When guestioned on the incident,

British Airways said: "We have contacted our customer to apologise. We are very sorry that on this occasion we have fallen short of our usual high standards," going on to promise the airline was, "taking immediate action to address this issue." From the evidence, however, it seems highly likely that this is not an isolated incident. The video surely reveals weeks, if not months, of neglected cleaning, in the form of inch-thick filth, suggesting BA might have a longer-term issue to address. The airline failed to offer the passenger a refund in acknowledgement of his disappointment, merely asserting that its flights to St Lucia in First Class start from £2,700 return, not the £8,798 listed on ba.com, which apparently represents the last minute cost.

Hardly a bargain, nonetheless, and certainly no excuse for shoddy standards!

Paramedic student to the rescue

Aiden Wilson, a first year Liverpool John Moores paramedic student, became somewhat of a hero on a Ryanair flight to Alicante, Spain, in January. The 21-year-old put his studies into practice as he assisted an unconscious pensioner, following a tannoy announcement by a Ryanair captain urging passengers with medical experience to come forward. "There was a call for a doctor or nurse to come forward, and then a second one - and no-one helped," Aiden explained.

The pensioner in question – an 80-yearold lady travelling from Manchester to Alicante with her family – was unconscious and unresponsive when Aiden reached her. Fortunately, he was able to stabilise the woman, who regained consciousness before being met on the ground by doctors and taken to hospital for further checks.

Aiden said he worried initially that the crew would not want a student helping, but after successfully saving the day, he came to the following sensible conclusion: "I think first aid and basic paramedic skills should be part of the primary school curriculum, even the basics like the recovery position can save someone's life."



Not a bad suggestion, Aiden. Perhaps it should be on the flight attendant training curriculum, too...

Air India engineer takes it on the chin

An Air India pilot physically assaulted a ground engineer on board flight number AI 143 following an argument over a delay. The aircraft had arrived in Chennai from Mumbai and was scheduled to take off at 9.45am to Delhi but developed a technical snag, leaving it 30 minutes behind schedule. Tensions began to rise between the two men because the pilot was not convinced the problem had been rectified and subsequently refused to fly, with the situation ultimately deteriorating into a punch-up in the cockpit. It was reported that the impromptu fist fight left the flight engineer with a minor chin injury.

Ironically, this fight was the source of further delay, with the next flight from Chennai to Paris ending up delayed by three hours with 122 passengers on board.

The Times of India named the pilot as Captain Manik Lal and the engineer as V T Kannan. An Air India official told The Times: "He was not pleased to see too many people inside the cockpit and started to send them out. The flight engineer V T Kannan reached the cockpit and informed the pilot that the plane was yet to be handed over to the crew for flying. But the pilot refused to pay heed to the explanation."

Eventually, the flight departed after Captain Lal was replaced by another pilot. Needless to say, a short temper and aggressive tendencies certainly aren't the best combination in a pilot, as Kannan knows only too well...

Don't carry a gun, it just won't fly

It surely comes as no surprise to anyone that federal law bans bringing a firearm to an airport, yet, despite this common knowledge, a record number of firearms was found at US airport security checkpoints in 2014. To add insult to injury, if you'll pardon the pun, according to the Transportation Security Administration, of the guns confiscated, four out of five (83%) were actually loaded...

In addition to a loaded assault rifle and loaded folding-stock rifle at airports in Dallas (where, incidentally, the most guns were discovered), a loaded revolver was also found at New York's La Guardia airport, clipped to a 94-year-old man's belt. Not exactly inconspicuous.

The question is: what excuse can these people possibly have for attempting to travel armed? TSA spokeswoman, Lisa Farbstein, said: "The most common excuse that we hear from people is that they forgot they had their firearms with them," adding that the second most frequent excuse was, "my husband packed my bag" or "my wife packed my bag."

And the list of weapons doesn't end with guns. Besides firearms, TSA officers found an Mk 2 fragmentation grenade in Los Angeles, a homemade avalanche control charge in Alaska, as well as fireworks, propane, spear guns, a flare gun, more than 700 stun guns, and smoke grenades. Additionally, bag searches turned up explosives and artillery shells, contraband drugs, razor blades, brass knuckles, throwing stars, scissors and countless knives, including an 8.5-inch knife hidden in an enchilada at Sonoma County airport in California. Now that's one lunch that's certain to give you more than just heartburn...

Despite security getting tighter and stricter at airports worldwide, the TSA's 2014 summary indicates the carriage of firearms jumped 22% in the US last year, and, worryingly, has more than tripled over the past decade.

Student detained over Arabic flashcards wins US\$25K

Back in 2009, a university student was detained at a US airport for possessing flashcards written in Arabic. Suspicion was raised because the written prompts allegedly contained the words "bomb" and "to kill", and he was subsequently held in police custody for five hours. The suspect was handcuffed for half this time as police waited for FBI agents to arrive - and guestioned for 30 minutes before ultimately being deemed harmless. It has since been announced that the student in guestion, now revealed to be Nicholas George, has won a US\$25,000 settlement from the Justice Department, which stipulates the need for more training for police and reiterates that police must have "reasonable suspicion" to detain someone and "probable cause" to arrest them.

Federal agents were cleared of liability by a US appeals court, but acknowledged that the 30 minutes they spent questioning George was unreasonable.

Remains to be screened...

A grieving mother carrying her late son's remains faced suspicion from Vancouver airport security when she attempted to travel in the company of a large, stuffed ladybird, in which she keeps his ashes. Investigations are ongoing into the death of Marney Mutch's son, Rhett, 20, who was shot and killed by Victoria police last November. She has carried him with her in this manner to comfort her ever since: "It actually feels like I've got my arm around him. It's all I've got," Mutch said.

Airport security demanded that she

remove the remains from the carrier for screening when she tried to pass through security, despite the fact that cremated remains are permitted in carry-on luggage, providing they are in a container that can go through X-ray security. Not only had Mutch complied with these rules, she was also carrying a certificate of cremation.

Of the fiasco, Mutch said: "He saw the stuffy and said, 'well, you're going to have to take the ashes out.' And I just said 'no way.'" At which point security stepped in and insisted that those were the rules and she must comply if she was to proceed through security. At the time, Mutch felt what she was asked to do was very undignified and consequently an argument ensued with security, including a supervisor, following which she removed the plastic bag containing her son's ashes from the ladybird.

"I just plunked it on the counter and said 'there you are, my son's remains,'" she said. To make matters worse, by the time she passed through security, Mutch had missed her flight. The Canadian Air Transport Security Authority says it has apologised to Mutch and begun an investigation into what happened.

A weighty problem

Late last year, no less than 700 pounds in weight of coins intended for UNICEF were found hidden in the car of an American Airlines flight attendant at Kennedy International airport. Back in October, Marco Costa's car suspension betrayed his scandalous secret, noticeably sagging beneath the weight of the money-laden bags. According to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Police Department, 56-year-old Costa was arrested for possession of stolen property, amongst other charges, on January 31. Mr Costa had collected US\$2,900 in Euros, US\$1,800 in British pounds and US\$150 in US coins from passengers as part of a partnership with the children's charity. According to a spokesperson for the airline, investigations are still ongoing.

Do you have a story or a comment to share? Write to: felicity@groundhandling.com

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