


AIRBORNE

October 2020

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“Not all doom and gloom” - Business aviation Brexit

“We need to appreciate that the UK has left the EU now. That’s not going to change. So now we have to step up and take those opportunities,” said Aoife O’Sullivan, chair of the British Business and General Aviation Association (BBGA) and partner in The Air Law Firm, in a recent webinar arranged by the lobby group.

The webinar, held on 22 September, brought together industry sector experts, aircraft operators, and analysts together with representatives of the CAA and UK government Department for Transport (DfT). Given the continued uncertainty of ongoing negotiations, much of the discussion focused on the worst case scenario of a ‘no deal’ Brexit at the end of the transition period on 31 December.

Foremost among the concerns raised was that, from this date, the UK will cease to be a member of EASA, the European regulator. Uncertainty also surrounds access to markets, the ability of charter flights to continue operating under existing EU freedoms, the right to cabotage and the status of aircraft imported through the UK or Isle of Man in respect of duties and VAT.

CAA Head of Licensing David Kendrick said: “There isn’t going to be a drop-dead moment on 1 January – flights will continue to operate after the deadline.” DfT deputy director for general aviation David Harding raised the potential for making the sector more competitive post-Brexit because the UK would have autonomy to develop regulations, including the possible simplification of licensing and medical certifications. It was further noted that a UK outside the EU could become a centre for aircraft leasing and indeed for aircraft deliveries, citing newly advantageous tax rules.

In a note forwarded to webinar delegates a couple of days later, the CAA provided an update on its contingency planning in the event of a failure to reach political agreement. This included pledges that: “all current technical requirements will be retained in UK domestic regulation”; “all type certificates, approvals and licences issued in accordance with EASA requirements that are in effect on 31 December will remain valid under UK law for two years unless they expire sooner”; and “the UK’s existing safety arrangements with countries beyond the EU will continue.”

Bizav industry market optimistic despite the pandemic

The 29th edition of Honeywell’s Global Business Aviation Outlook concludes that the market remains optimistic and is in a good condition to deal with further problems caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Heath Patrick, President of Americas Aftermarket at Honeywell, said: “Business jet usage is expected to rebound to 80 to 85% of 2019 levels in the fourth quarter of 2020, indicating demand for business jet travel is returning after a slowdown as the pandemic began. The information we gleaned from operators shows a less than 1% decline in five-year purchase plans, so despite the short-term effects of the pandemic, we don’t expect long-term changes to purchase plans or the overall health of the business jet market.” Honeywell further predicts total bizjet deliveries of some 7,300 units over the next ten years – down by just 4% from the 7,600 predicted last year and 7,700 in the 2018 edition.

European and US traffic levels hit ceiling

Bizav traffic levels in both Europe and the US seem to have stabilised at some 80 to 85% of totals seen in the same period last year, according to the latest data produced by specialist analyst WingX Advance. This reflects the clear message that the bizav recovery has been considerably stronger than that of commercial airlines. Airline activity is currently running below 50% of 2019 levels, while YoY bizav numbers were running at around 82% at the end of September.

There continues to be a difference between traffic levels in Europe and the US. On this side of the Atlantic, overall flight levels in Europe were down by just 11% from mid-August to late September, compared to a 19% drop in the US. It should be noted however that European figures are beginning to weaken with the onset of autumn – the average number of daily sectors was 2,339 at the end of August, compared with 1,782 at the beginning of October. This reflects peak holiday demand and perhaps a fall in the number of corporate passengers returning to their desks and aircraft.

In the US, flight activity is increasing at the beginning of October with numbers in certain states, including Florida and Colorado, actually exceeding 2019 levels. However the largest markets – California, Texas and New York – continue to see traffic levels up to 20% down on their 2019 marks.

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The spectrum of our expertise encompasses: technical and performance specifications of competing aircraft models – from small pistons and turboprops through the whole range of corporate jets to commercial airliners; research and detailed reporting on the operational history of individual airframes and operators both private and commercial; the registration and ownership requirements of registries worldwide; and the most suitable and efficient corporate structures for holding aviation assets. In a nutshell, we can add real value to the decision-making process and provide peace of mind built on a solid

Events rescheduled

A number of events highlighting the importance of business aviation have been rescheduled as a consequence of Covid-19. The biennial Middle East Business Aviation Association show scheduled to be held in Dubai from 8 to 10 December has been moved out to 22 to 24 February 2021. The annual general meeting of the World Economic Forum at the Swiss resort of Davos-Klosters in late January has been postponed. The meeting, usually a magnet for the use of business aircraft, has been shifted to Lucerne-Bürgenstock and will run from 18 to 21 May. Switzerland will therefore be the global focus of the bizav industry because European Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition (EBACE) is scheduled to be held that same week in Geneva.

NBAA to host 'VBACE'

Following the cancellation of this year's NBAA-BACE, which was to have been held in Orlando from 6 to 8 October, the NBAA is hosting its first online bizav trade show. The Virtual Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition (VBACE) will run from 2 to 3 December. The online event, free to members of the NBAA, will feature elements familiar to trade show visitors including education sessions, virtual booths, keynote speakers and (virtual) opportunities for networking.

Russia shifts to clean sheet design for supersonic bizjet

Russian officials estimate a global demand for some 400 supersonic bizjets. It was announced earlier this year that Russia was looking to design its own competitor to current US projects, which would be based on the Tupolev Tu-160 supersonic bomber. It has now been decided, however, that the new design will be a clean sheet project due to the difficulties of converting a military design to fly supersonically with a passenger cabin, together with environmental concerns over emissions and noise.

Corporate aircraft news

On 6 October Airbus Corporate Jets launched a new aircraft – the ACJ TwoTwenty – a corporate version of the A220-100 commercial airliner. The A220 aircraft was originally known as the C-Series when the European consortium bought the project from Bombardier. The TwoTwenty will boast a range of some 10,500km (sufficient for London to Los Angeles) and will be offered with a number of different modular cabin layouts. The TwoTwenty is expected to receive certification in 2023 and the first 15 will be outfitted in Indianapolis as part of a partnership with Swiss-headquartered bizav services provider Comlux, which will also operate the first two examples.

Bombardier confirmed that the first example of its Learjet 75 Liberty has now entered service with a US customer. The six-seat twinjet was announced in July last year with a Vision flight deck and Garmin G5000 avionics upgrade.

Featuring new auto throttles, a digital pressurisation system and a completely new cabin, Textron Aviation's upgrade to the King Air 350/350ER – the 360/360ER – has received FAA type certification just a few weeks after announcing the new versions. The first delivery is expected imminently.

French manufacturer Daher announced the delivery of the 1,000th example of its TBM turboprop single family of aircraft – a TBM 940 – to a US client. This landmark was reached some 30 years after the first TBM 700, originally a collaboration between the American Mooney Airplane Company and French light aircraft manufacturer SOCATA, entered service in 1990. SOCATA was acquired by Daher in 2008.

In a major landmark for the AS2 supersonic bizjet, Aerion Supersonic has confirmed that it is launching wind tunnel testing to three times the speed of sound later this month. This testing is a step in reaching the preliminary design review for the AS2 next year. Production of the aircraft is scheduled to begin in 2023, with the first flight of the aircraft expected in 2025. In addition, Aerion has reached agreement with UK-based BAE Systems to develop the fly-by-wire flight control system for the AS2. It will be the first time BAE's Rochester site has worked on a commercial supersonic jet since Concorde.



AIRCRAFT FACT FILE \\\

BAC One Eleven 400



CATEGORY

Heavy jet

MANUFACTURER

British Aircraft Corporation, UK

ENGINE

2 x RR RB.163 Spey Mk 511 turboprops

LENGTH

28.50 m

WINGSPAN

26.97 m

RANGE

2,040 km

MAX. SPEED

882 kmh

SEATING CAPACITY

89 in airline service

NO. OF CREW

2

MAXIMUM TAKE-OFF WEIGHT (MTOW)

39,000 kg

DESCRIPTION

The BAC One Eleven (or BAC-111/BAC 1-11) first flew on 20 August 1963. Over the following 30 years the design proved a popular short haul twinjet commercial airliner worldwide. The baseline (series 200) aircraft received certification and entered service in April 1965. The increased weight series 300 followed shortly after, along with the 400, which was aimed at the US airline market and featured equipment and avionics designed for operation in the US. American Airlines was to receive some 30 examples of the 400 making it the largest customer for the One Eleven.

In 1967, a stretched version of the aircraft – the series 500 (or 'Super One Eleven') – seating up to 119 passengers was launched. Examples of the One Eleven continued in commercial service until the mid-1990s, when environmental pressures made efficient operation of the aircraft increasingly difficult. A number of One Elevens found service as corporate transports with the 400 proving particularly popular with US corporations.