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Uncertainty again for Jersey Aircraft Registry

The Jersey Aircraft Registry (JAR) was relaunched last year as ‘the world’s first blockchain registry’ under a new partnership model between the Ports of Jersey and IT specialist TrustFlight (Jersey). But the JAR has again failed to gain any momentum and TrustFlight has now withdrawn from the operation. There are just three active aircraft on the registry – a Cessna Citation CJ4, a Beechcraft Baron and a BN Islander – and sole responsibility for the JAR has reverted to the Ports of Jersey.

By way of comparison, the Guernsey Aircraft Register – generally known as ‘2-REG’ – boasts just under 300 current aircraft and has been particularly successful in registering dormant commercial airliners between leases. The original plan was for Jersey and Guernsey to operate a joint Channel Islands’ registry, but the two islands failed to reach agreement after protracted negotiations and Guernsey went it alone. 2-REG was launched in December 2013, with the JAR following two years later. 2-REG is run as a public/private partnership between the Guernsey government and Amsterdam-based SGI Aviation, a subsidiary of US venture capital firm Seabury Capital.

If comments in the press are to be taken seriously, the JAR is currently viewed locally as “a vanity project” and “an embarrassment” having cost almost £1 million to set up with negligible return. According to Deputy Kirsten Morel, minister at the Economic Development Department, the Jersey government is refocusing the registry to help develop a ‘sustainable and low carbon’ aviation sector. Morel said a decision on the continued viability of the JAR would be made by December 2022.

Pre-owned jets for sale at historic low

Just 1,134 private jets are currently for sale globally, a fall of over 38% from the 1,839 aircraft that were available in June 2020, according to the latest analysis by London-based private jet broker Colibri Aircraft. Even more significantly, the current inventory represents just 4.65% of the pre-owned fleet, the lowest level since records began in the 1980s. Colibri suggests that this stark reduction in available aircraft has largely been led by the US market, where buyers (many for the first time) were forced to use private aircraft as an alternative to commercial airlines during the pandemic. Another factor is the high price of new aircraft compared to pre-owned examples due to depreciation, which has been a stark feature of the market since the financial crash of 2008.

Bizav traffic continues to grow

Business aviation traffic levels in July exceeded that of pre-pandemic levels according to the latest data from specialist analyst WingX. Flights by business jets and turboprops over July eclipsed levels from July 2019 by some 13%. Year-to-date figures for the first seven months also now show levels on a par with 2019.

Once again, the growth in traffic levels has been driven by the North American market, where bizav activity was up by 12% over July 2019. Most notable, bizjet flights in the US increased by some 25% over the same month two years ago. In terms of category, US large cabin jet flights increased by 19%, light jet flights increased by 26% and super mid-size by 30%. European traffic also recorded a significant spike in activity with a 14% increase over July 2019. This increase has clearly been led by demand for leisure destinations in the Mediterranean.

NetJets sees booming demand

US fractional specialist NetJets reported a 45% increase in traffic over the US Independence Day holiday on 4 July. President Sales & Marketing Patrick Gallagher said: “In 57 years, the company has never seen so much demand. But we will not damage the customer experience by over selling.” Due to this unprecedented demand, the company has announced that it has “temporarily paused” sales of fractional shares, jet cards and leases for its fleet of Citation XLS and Phenom 300 aircraft. It is however continuing its offering on its fleet of larger aircraft, including the Citation Latitude, Challenger 350 and Global 6000.

EAA AirVenture returns in style

The annual EAA AirVenture air show is marketed, with good reason, as the largest such event on the planet. After the 2020 event was cancelled due to the pandemic, the show returned last month to its home in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. In the three days leading up to the event, a staggering 7,298 aircraft flew in for the show – more than double the 3,500 that arrived in 2019. OEMs also made their presence felt among the general aviation aircraft. Textron, in particular, brought its complete range of aircraft including the new Cessna SkyCourier twin turboprop, which made its public debut.

AVIATION SERVICES HUB: Aviation consultancy

Accurate, up-to-date and comprehensive information is a key requirement for making the right decisions in respect of sourcing, owning, registering and operating an aircraft. RANA’s specialist aviation consultancy service can draw upon a considerable breadth of knowledge across both the corporate and commercial aviation markets, which is coupled to our established links with authorities, manufacturers, service providers and operators worldwide.

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 foundation. Contact our team to find out what you need to know.

Q2 OEM deliveries rebound sharply

Each of the five largest business aircraft OEMs have reported their Q2 sales figures, with most recording substantial increases over deliveries for the same period in 2020. Levels are now equalling or exceeding pre-pandemic levels.

Canada's Bombardier delivered 29 jets in Q2 2021 (against 20 in Q2 2020), including no fewer than 11 examples of its Global 7500 flagship, together with six Globals, nine Challengers and three Learjets.

Gulfstream delivered only 21 jets (18 large jets and three mid-cabin), down from 32 in the same period in 2020. This fall was anticipated as the US manufacturer was forced to adjust production due to supply chain issues. Brazil's Embraer delivered 20 jets (against 13 in Q2 2020), comprising 11 Phenom 300, five Praetor 600, three Praetor 500 and a single Phenom 100. Textron almost doubled deliveries in Q2 2021, with 44 jets (including seven Latitudes and five Longitudes), up from 23 in Q2 last year, and 33 King Air turboprops, up from 15 last year.

French manufacturer Dassault (which reports on a half-yearly basis) delivered just six Falcon business jets in the H1 2021, down from 16 in the same period of 2020, but took orders for 25 jets (worth €1.413 billion), up from five orders (worth €669 million) in H1 2020.

Farnborough Airport offers SAF

The UK's Farnborough Airport is now offering Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) to all aircraft using the airport – a significant demonstration of business aviation's commitment to green energy. It is estimated that the use of SAF reduces CO2 emissions by some 80%. Farnborough's CEO Simon Geere said: "We are fully committed to a sustainable future and are delighted to offer our customers the opportunity to make a greener choice and work with us to play an integral part in delivering against the UK government's targets for net-zero carbon emissions."

Wheels Up goes public

Private aviation membership company Wheels Up became the first private aviation company to go public as it listed on the New York Stock Exchange on 14 July. Its shares closed up 16.31%, at \$11.55, on the first day of trading, valuing the company at \$2.4 billion. The listing followed directly after Wheels Up's merger with Aspirational Consumer Lifestyle Corp., a special purpose acquisition company formed by consumer investors and former LVMH operating executives alongside private equity firm L Catterton. Wheels Up promotes access to a fleet of some 1,700 turboprops, mid-size and large cabin aircraft and has established partnerships with Delta Airlines, American Express and Porsche among others to provide what it calls 'democratisation' of private aircraft travel. Wheels Up was founded in 2013 by Kenny Dichter and reported a 56% increase in active members in Q1 2021.

Corporate aircraft news

Oregon-based Stratos Aircraft is initially offering the latest version of its very light single jet for sale in kit form. The 716X, which made its public debut at the EAA AirVenture at Oshkosh, is the experimental version of what will eventually become the Part 23-certified Stratos 716. The build time for the 716X, which features Garmin 3X avionics and a TBO PW&C JT15D5 turbofan, is expected to be about nine months with a builder-assist programme and will help the company to streamline production processes for the 716.

Stratos Aircraft President Carsten Sundin said: "People want the high-altitude speed, quiet and smoothness of a jet. But, up until now, many of them have been priced out of the top end of the market. They've had to settle for prop airplanes that fly 10,000 to 15,000 ft lower and 100 to 150 knots slower than modern jets. At Stratos, our goal is to lower the cost of owning and operating a jet to turboprop levels." The initial price tag for the 716X is \$2.5 million and the certified version is expected to add an additional \$1 million. The target for certification is 2028 but is "entirely funding dependent".

Textron's Cessna Citation Longitude super mid-size twin received FAA certification on 23 September 2019, but EASA certification was delayed due to the pandemic and manufacturing shutdowns. EASA certification was finally secured on 13 July, so deliveries to customers in Europe can begin. A total of 60 Longitudes have so far been registered to clients in the US and Chile.



AIRCRAFT FACT FILE \\\

Bell 505 Jet Ranger X



CATEGORY

Helicopter

MANUFACTURER

Bell Textron, Canada

ENGINE

1 x Safran Arrius 2R turboshaft

LENGTH

12.93 m

ROTOR DIAMETER

11.28 m

RANGE

617 km

MAX. SPEED

232 kmh

SEATING CAPACITY

4

NO. OF CREW

1

MAXIMUM TAKE-OFF WEIGHT (MTOW)

2,030 kg

DESCRIPTION

More than 7,300 examples of the original Bell 206 JetRanger were produced between 1962 and 2010, when Bell effectively exited the light single-engine sector of the market. The 505 Jet Ranger X, which was announced as the Bell SLS at the Paris Air Show in 2013, reopened the door to that market. The Jet Ranger 505 X made its first flight in November 2014 and received Transport Canada approval in December 2016. The first customer delivery was made three months later at the Heli-Expo show, and FAA certification was granted in June 2017.

The 505 Jet Ranger X is essentially a 'clean sheet' design but does incorporate some elements of the final version of the original 206, including the rotor system. The 505 features the Garmin G1000H glass avionics suite and is powered by the potent Safran Arrius 2R engine. It is constructed of both metal and composites and features a substantial 0.51m³ luggage bay. The aircraft is produced at Bell Helicopter's assembly and distribution centre at Montreal Mirabel.