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St Helena Airport

Calibration Flights

St Helena Airport's historic Calibration Flights are currently planned for mid-September. Prior to this, Basil Read will need to obtain approval from our regulator - Air Safety Support International (ASSI) - for temporary use of the runway.

ASSI's Senior Aerodrome Inspector, Justin Rothwell, arrived on-Island on 29 August to carry out his assessment. This includes verifying the Airport infrastructure, observing a table-top exercise for the emergency services, and checking that all safety procedures are in place and being observed. Once Basil Read has demonstrated to ASSI that all safety procedures are in place, ASSI will approve temporary use of the runway. These flights will be undertaken by Flight Calibration Services Limited (FCSL) who will travel to St Helena on a Beechcraft King Air aircraft which has been leased from TAB Charters, based in South Africa.

My Role in the Calibration Flights - Part 1

Leading up to the planned calibration flights a lot of work is going on behind the scenes and with different agencies. We've caught up with some of the main parties involved, to look at their role in preparing for the first aircraft to land on St Helena. Part 2 will follow in next week's Airport Update.



Captain Grant Brighton, TAB Charters

Grant's role will be to ensure the safe passage of the aircraft to and from St Helena. He will need to ensure the trip is correctly planned and executed on the day of arrival on the Island.

Whilst on St Helena, Grant will monitor the weather reports and ultimately decide on the best times and days to fly. He will work closely in conjunction with Flight Calibration Services Limited (FCSL) to ensure the aircraft is flown in accordance with its requirements for calibration.

Grant commented:

"It is a true honour and privilege to fly to St Helena and be part of this historic event that is about to unfold."



Grant Brighton

Co-pilot and First Officer, Dillan Van Niekerk, TAB Charters

Dillan will be the First Officer on the aircraft for all flights. He will jointly share the 'hands on' flying, navigational duties and radio communications with Captain Grant Brighton. Both crew members will need to ensure the calibration tests are flown as accurately as possible to achieve the end goal of correct calibration of the new instrumentation based at St Helena Airport.

Dillan said:

"I feel very privileged to be part of this flight. There are no words to explain the excitement I have for the history that we will be part of. It's a flight I'm sure I'll always want to re-live."



Dillan Van Niekerk

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My Role in the Calibration Flights - Part 1

Chief Aircraft Engineer, Jeffrey McKenzie, TAB Charters

Jeff's role as Chief Aircraft Engineer will be to ensure that the aircraft is maintained and kept fully airworthy.

A spares and tool kit has been shipped to St Helena and Jeff will have full access in order for him to fulfil his vital role.



Jeff McKenzie



Flight Calibration Services Limited (FCSL) have reported they are proud and excited to be working with Basil Read towards the certification and opening of the new St Helena Airport.

Calibrating the instrument landing system, airport lighting and flight instrument procedures is a challenging task - requiring expertise, finessed flying, advanced flight inspection knowledge, and a little luck with the weather! The St Helena flight inspection team consists of Flight Inspection Manager and Chief Flight Inspector Nick Whitehouse, and Chief Pilot of FCSL Stuart Rawlinson. Nick and Stuart have flown together for many years all over the world, and are very much considered to be at the top of their profession. The challenges that a remote airport such as St Helena offers are both strategically and tactically demanding. Both Nick and Stuart are well prepared and look forward to meeting the challenges and working with colleagues on St Helena in certifying the new airport as open for business.

Nick Whitehouse is not only the Technical Director and joint founder of FCSL with over 35 years' experience of flight inspection and air navigation systems - but also an avid flyer. Nick is responsible for the organisation and management of the whole of the Flight Inspection task at St Helena.

His main role as flight inspector in the cockpit will be the recording, and assessment of the various radio signals emitted from the instrument landing system. From this assessment, the systems can be certified for use by commercial air traffic into and out of St Helena.

Nick Whitehouse



Stuart Rawlinson, as Chief Pilot, is responsible within the company for the training and management of the company's pilots, who require a wide range of experience, skill and at times, patience with the weather!

Having flown since he was aged 13, he has grown up with flying in his blood, piloting anything from a vintage Tiger Moth bi-plane to higher performance turbine jet powered aircraft. Whilst on calibration duties at St Helena, Stuart will be responsible for ensuring the aircraft is flown within very tight tolerances on approximately 50 various approaches into St Helena Airport. Typically the aircraft must be within a window of 5 metres by 5 metres whilst flying at over 200mph.

Stuart Rawlinson



Airport Project Director, Janet Lawrence

"The Access Office is involved in the planning and facilitation of overall airport certification, including the calibration flights. We have a co-ordinating role between Basil Read and those parties in SHG that will be part of airport operations (e.g - Customs, Immigration, Biosecurity etc).

"The Access Office does not itself have an operational role so on the day of the arrival of the calibration flight, I expect to be another eager spectator."



Janet Lawrence

Head of HM Customs & Excise, Jon Holland:

"Her Majesty's Customs & Excise is responsible for maintaining the border integrity of St Helena. We currently carry out law enforcement operations at Jamestown Wharf and also at Rupert's Bay - in order to protect St Helena from the threat of illegally smuggled drugs, firearms, explosives, and any other items considered to be a threat to the Island or population. No vessel can enter the Island without having been 'cleared' by a Customs Officer.

"Once aircraft start landing at our new airport, they will also need to be 'cleared' in exactly the same way. So from the very first calibration flights landing, our officers will be involved in this very important duty."



Jon Holland

My Role in the Calibration Flights - Part 1

Senior Immigration Officer, Emerald Newman

"This is an exciting time for the immigration team, having been involved in the process leading up to this historic moment for the last four years. Preparing for calibration flights means that we are getting closer to receiving our first operational flight and handling our first fare-paying passengers arriving by air. The Immigration Service is now looking forward to welcoming the calibration flight crew. Pre-entry checks are carried out in advance as well as on first arrival to confirm nationality, identity and status of the individuals arriving on the plane. Operationally, the calibration flights highlighted a change that the Immigration Service needed to make to policy to enable an aircraft to exceptionally travel into and out of St Helenian territorial airspace without crew clearing immigration every time. Aside from this, the team are being handled in exactly the same way as all those working on the airport contract and the Immigration Service looks forward to meeting the crew at border control on arrival."



Emerald Newman

Pest Control and Biosecurity Officer, Jill Key

"Biosecurity is about protecting the Island from new pests and diseases, so our main role in the calibration flights will be to ensure that the historic first flight to land on the Island conforms to our regulations. We will also be ensuring that the aircraft does not have any mosquitoes onboard, which could bring malaria or other human diseases to the Island. St Helena is free from Anopheles, which is the Malaria carrying mosquito, and we want to keep it that way."

"Biosecurity works closely with Customs and we will also be checking that any Baggage or goods brought from the aircraft are clean and free from pests"



Jill Key

Health & Safety Qualifications for PMU Staff

Health & Safety Inspector, Lucia Plato, and Environmental Inspector, Nick Stevens, of the Halcrow Project Management Unit (PMU) have recently gained internationally-recognised General Certificates in Health & Safety with the National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH). Both Lucia and Nick studied with Phoenix Health & Safety, taking around 18 months to remotely complete their course.

Course modules included the study of Health & Safety Regulations, and Management, plus the Controlling of Workplace Hazards and Risk Control. There were also practical sessions which enabled Lucia and Nick to expand their knowledge of health & safety policy, organisation, planning, regulations and the control of workplace hazards.

As the Health & Safety Inspector, Lucia's role is to carry out inspections of the Airport buildings, runway, and Rupert's Wharf - creating site observations detailing any issues to be addressed.

Lucia commented:

"Having this qualification has benefited my job role because I am now more confident when carrying out inspections and making site observations. I actually feel quite proud of myself for achieving this qualification as there aren't many people on the Island qualified in this area. Now that I am internationally qualified, I am more likely to find a job anywhere in the world as a Health & Safety Inspector."

Nick's role is to assist the PMU Environmental Monitor and work with the contractors on all environmental and archaeological issues on site. He also assists with maintaining health & safety at the Airport site.

Nick added:

"Having achieved this qualification, I am now able to carry out any role involving health & safety inspections. It feels great to have gained this certificate and motivates me to study further in this field."

Congratulations to both Lucia and Nick on their achievements!

Lucia Plato



Nick Stevens



Navigational Aids Used at St Helena Airport

St Helena Airport will be equipped with the following Navigational Aids (NavAids) vital to the safety of aircraft, both in the air and on the ground.

- **Non-Directional Beacon (NDB)** - This is a navigation aid that shows the relative position of the beacon from an aircraft. This system can be affected by atmospheric conditions, but can be useful for aircraft flying at lower heights than normal airliners.
- **Doppler Very High Frequency Omni-Range (DVOR)** - This equipment provides signals that allows a pilot to fly defined radials to and from the beacon, and so is used for Instrument Flight Approaches as well as en-route navigation.
- **Localiser** - Provides very precise navigational information that is usually aligned to a runway heading as part of an instrument approach. In the case of St Helena, the Localiser is offset by just over 11 degrees due to signal interference from the Barn. The pilot receives information on cockpit instruments, advising whether the aircraft is on track or to the left or right of the track. The offset Localiser at St Helena requires a small turn onto the final runway heading as the aircraft approaches the Airport.
- **Distance Measuring Equipment (DME)** - Provides distance to and from the station. The DME station is co-located with the DVOR and Localiser to provide distance information in addition to the horizontal guidance to the station.
- **Ground Based Augmentation System (GBAS)** - This is a relatively new technology that uses satellites to provide horizontal and vertical guidance to the pilot on approach to the Airport. A principal benefit for St Helena is that this system is not affected by terrain around the Airport, allowing a straight-in approach to be flown by aircraft fitted with the necessary equipment. Comair's B737-800s are equipped with this technology.

Aircraft flying to and from St Helena will use a combination of NavAids. These will include GPS for the main part of the flight, until close enough to pick up the signals from the DVOR/DME. This will be used as part of the Instrument Flight Procedure to correctly position the aircraft for approach to the Airport. The final approach will use one of the DVOR and DME, Localiser/DME or GBAS systems to a decision height, when the landing is carried out visually. The Localiser/DME and GBAS permit the aircraft to fly lower in cloud than the DVOR/DME, before the crew need to have visual contact with the runway.



Other Instruments to Aid Flights to and from St Helena Airport

