



Issue 6 - Dec09 - Jan 10

# Contrails

## Newsletter of the Christchurch Aviation Society

### Private Jets - Indefensible or Indispensable

Our speaker for the meeting on 4th November was Steve Billett - Chief Executive Officer of CTC Aviation Jet Services. A career in civil aviation encompassed British Airways and Britannia Airways with significant experience on the 737, simulators and management. Steve became CEO and Chief Pilot of his present company when it commenced operations with a Falcon 2000 EAsy and Hawker 800/900 aircraft in late 2007.



The public perception of business jets was quite clearly one of corporate excess publicised and exacerbated by the current financial crisis. The Financial Times had reported in September 2007 that order books for business jets were at record levels – by May 2009 feast had turned to famine with reduced manufacturing and flying rates sharply down. Job cuts of over 40% had been seen in the biggest private aircraft manufacturer, Cessna.

Steve outlined the problems of operating a private jet which included high financial and capital cost, regulatory problems, environmental issues, high level of training commitments not to mention insurance costs and basic operating costs. Another criticism levelled is that a private jet occupies air traffic space carrying less than a dozen passengers compared to the commercial jet carrying 200 or so. In addition, because of

all these costs, the industry had attracted a number of 'cowboys' who cut corners and when problems arose brought the industry into bad repute.

So how do private and business jets survive against this daunting background of problems? The USA has twice the amount of jets as the rest of the world added together so there is a large home market - albeit suffering. Convenience is the largest issue in corporate travel - not only the ability to tailor times to suit users but, in many cases in Europe, often the only way to achieve a multi-stop route in a realistic timescale. Privacy combined with the ability to use office equipment such as fax, phones, computers and internet access enables a high salaried executive or team to arrive at a meeting well informed and in good physical and mental shape. Further benefits are speed of handling through the terminals of less used point to point airports - the passengers arrive and take off commences in minutes - not hours.

The complexity and costs of operating under current regulations can be simplified by hiring an aircraft, as required, from a professional corporate jet services company such as CTC. The client company achieves all the benefits of owning a private jet without the headaches. Steve gave an example of a trip from Bournemouth to a business meeting at 12.30 in Norway 80 miles from Oslo. By BA taking into account time to Heathrow, check in time, local transport in Norway, departure from Bournemouth would be 0400. Leaving the meeting at 17.30 local would mean missing the last flight out of Oslo so necessitating an over night stay. Total time 31 hours 15 mins. Charter jet equivalent requires departure from Bournemouth at 0905 returning by 1915 and negating the need for an over night stay. If you have a team of 8 or more people the costs are very competitive. Steve made an excellent case which was followed by a lively Q&A session from a convinced audience.

### Forthcoming Events for 2010

**Wed, 03 Mar 10, Hunter One**, Mike Phipp, co-author of the book of the same name, tells the story of a private jet aircraft fleet. The mystery of the red Hunter at Bournemouth Airport can now be re-

**Wed, 05 May 10, AGM** Followed by a talk on **Boscombe Down Aviation Collection** by Ron Fulton or John Sharpe. This collection is 'behind the wire' and was closed to visitors during 2009.