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Chief Executive's welcome

Welcome to the December edition of the BAR UK Newsletter.

Some topics seem to run and run, and Air Passenger Duty (APD) is one of them. This discriminatory tax against air travellers has caused huge concerns, not just amongst airlines and their passengers, but also travel agents, tour operators and through more than one diplomatic channel.

It is not too late to rescind the November 2010 increases, and BAR UK urges the government to do so before it finds out, too late, how destructive its policies are for the economies of this country and several overseas.

The airline industry has continued to be adversely affected in recent months by the on-going economic crises that affect various countries, linked to the need to promote air travel at low rates that will be difficult to sustain in the future.

The regulatory burden imposed by a number of countries continues to be a concern, as does a recent judgment in the European Court of Justice concerning compensation for delayed passengers.

Looking ahead, a new year is around the corner – let's hope it is a whole load better than this one has been!

A very happy and peaceful Christmas to you all, and best wishes for a great New Year.

Mike Carrivick

1. Air Passenger Duty – The row rumbles on

The row over the high levels of APD rightly refuses to go away.



Matters have not been helped by reports of the Chancellor stating that APD revenues are needed to help with rescuing bankrupt banks.

One national newspaper, The Daily Telegraph, has caught the mood of the general public, and is running a campaign to get APD scrapped – it is openly acknowledged that it is not an environmental tax. BAR UK fully supports the paper, and UK residents can add their name to the campaign by visiting the BAR UK website:

<http://www.bar-uk.org/topics/apd.htm>

BAR UK has also written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer urging him to use his Pre-Budget report on 9 December as an opportunity to withdraw the increases planned in November 2010.

It is our intention that the Treasury continue to hear from the marketplace how APD will have devastating effects, and a number of options are being explored to do so in the most effective manner.

2. Heathrow Airport charges 2010/11

Yet again, BAA seems unable to fully work in partnership with its airline customers.



It has indicated that its charges for 2010/11 will rise to the maximum possible under the charges regime regulated by the CAA.

Such ambitious pricing may suit its shareholders, but it ill-serves the airlines and the travelling public.

Economic conditions continue to be the worst that the industry has suffered, and it is acknowledged that this also applies to airport operators. What is not being seen is any fully collaborative measure to revise capital expenditures or pass on savings made on operational expenditure.

Heathrow Airport needs to carefully consider the longer-term detrimental effects its pricing policies could have.

It is in competition with other airports and, as a result of its sale, will soon be in competition with Gatwick Airport as well.

Making every journey dearer is not the way to get more business.

BAR UK calls on Heathrow Airport Ltd to minimise any price increases and NOT maximise them.

3. National ID Cards – a soft introduction

Industry resistance to mandatory issuance of National ID Cards for airside airport workers proved successful.

Instead, they have been introduced in a more restricted launch programme at two airports, London City and Manchester, commencing 30 November. These will be issued at no cost for the first 18 months whilst the benefits are evaluated.

Voluntary identity cards will also start to be issued to the general public living and working in Greater Manchester (at a cost of £30). Those wishing to apply can now request an application pack by calling **0300 330 0000** or visiting **www.direct.gov.uk/identity**.

4. News from BAR UK



(a) Meeting with the Aviation Minister

Politically, BAR UK endeavours to represent its members at ministerial level, as well as at departmental levels.

The latest ministerial meeting recently took place with Paul Clark M.P., Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport. Led by BAR UK Chair Sandra Bloodworth, a wide range of topics were discussed and debated, not least the adverse impacts of Air Passenger Duty.

Our thoughts were made very clear and well explained. The Minister was obliged to confirm the Treasury's hard-line policy, but was made well aware that jobs were at stake, that unemployment benefits could be expected to increase and tax and National Insurance revenues decline as a result.

(b) New BAR UK website

On time, and on budget, the 'new look' website went live on 1 November!
(<http://www.bar-uk.org>)

Very positive comments have been received.

It looks good, navigating is easy, and the new 'Search' routine is very helpful.

Our sincere thanks go to Stop Designs (www.stopdesigns.co.uk) for their dedication and very constructive ideas during the planning and development stages.

(c) People on the move - welcomes and farewells

Since the last edition, we say welcome or farewell to the BAR UK delegates shown below.

Unusually, three of the people on the move are also directors of BAR UK: Nigel Milton, Barry Prior and Angel Valdemoros.

The sincere thanks of the board and the secretariat go to all three for the time and dedication that they have given to BAR UK, and we offer our best wishes to them all for the times ahead.

<u>Airline</u>	<u>Welcome</u>	<u>Farewell</u>
Austrian Airlines	Gudrun Sullivan	Alexander Schneck
Estonian	To be advised	Barry Prior
Eva Airways	Rick Hsieh	Gary Wang
Iberia	To be advised	Angel Valdemoros
Virgin Atlantic	To be advised	Nigel Milton
Yemenia	Nuaman Al-Awadhi	Jubran Al-Jahdari

(d) BAR UK at NATS Swanwick



Our third meeting of the year was hosted by NATS at their Swanwick centre near Southampton.

Our hosts committed themselves to ensuring that we got the most out of a heavily-committed day, and provided a series of presentations which linked the effective and environmental management of airspace to on-time and efficient airline operations.

We are very grateful to the NATS Chief Executive for being the keynote speaker, to all of the NATS team who also presented, and to General Manager Customer Affairs Andy Shand and his team who undertook all the arrangements.

(e) Next General Meeting

The next General Meeting is on Friday 26 February 2010.

The venue is the offices of Stephenson Harwood in the City of London, who are generously hosting the event.

More details will be circulated nearer the time.

(f) Other meeting dates 2010 – please note for your diaries NOW!

We are very grateful for the generous sponsorship being offered by the organisations shown below.

<u>General Meetings 2010</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Venue / Sponsor</u>
Friday 18 June (inc AGM) (TBC)	10:00	Eye for Travel Exhibition, Islington
Friday 15 October	10:00	Gates & Partners

5. Gatwick Express trains – unwelcome changes?

One of the noticeable features of the Gatwick Express was the dedicated sets of trains (see photo) used exclusively until very recently. They incorporated extra wide doors for easy access, plus plenty of luggage space with air travellers in mind, and operated exclusively between Gatwick and London Victoria stations.



More recently, some of these train units were replaced by standard coaches (but more in number), that don't include these features, for the peak time services that now operate beyond Gatwick to Brighton.

The travel industry is now concerned to learn that Southern Trains plans to retire the dedicated trains altogether, and replace them all with standard ones.

The concerns are that access to these coaches is far more limited, that there is far less baggage storage volume, and that they will fail to meet the legally-required accessibility standards in a few years' time.

BAR UK, along with many other industry organisations, has written to Southern, with copies to the Department for Transport, Passenger Focus (consumers' interests), Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, Passenger Focus and the Equalities and Human Rights Commission.

The reply that has been received from Southern does not satisfy us, so options are now being considered.

6. Slot regulation – winter 2009/10

Enquiries continue to be received by BAR UK as to whether there may be any relaxation of the EU Regulation that requires all slots to be used 80% of the time, below which penalties apply.

Guidance from Airport Coordination Limited, the relevant authority in the UK, is that no such relaxation is expected and that the Regulation will apply as normal.

The next BAR UK Newsletter will be published in February 2010



MERRY CHRISTMAS!