

# BLACKPOOL AVIATION SOCIETY

THE BLACKPOOL BRANCH OF AIR BRITAIN

presents.

## DEFUNCT AIRLINES SEEN AT PALMA PART ONE

by BILL WHITTAKER



BLACKPOOL AVIATION SOCIETY MONOGRAPH NO. 2

*April 2023*

## Defunct Airlines At Palma

You will be aware from my previous offerings that I have made quite a few visits to Mallorca in the past, and so obviously I have spent some time at Palma airport. Looking back through my photographs I realised that many of the airlines captured are no longer around, so I thought that I would document them for the magazine. All my own photographs and all taken through glass.

### SCANAIR

Scanair was founded in Denmark in 1961 as a charter airline and was partially owned by Scandinavian Airlines System.

First aircraft operated was a DC-7, then after the airline HQ moved to Stockholm SAS supplied Scanair with DC-8s. Boeing 727 were added as the demand increased,

The A300, Boeing 747, DC-10 and MD-82/83 were also operated. They served holiday destinations in Europe particularly the Canary Island and winter ski resorts and eventually carried over two million passengers a year. Failing to turn a profit the airline merged with the Danish airline Conair in 1994, the new airline becoming Premiair (more of which below).



Scanair DC-8-63 OY-KTG 25<sup>th</sup> June 1988 + Anonymous DC-3

### CONAIR

Conair of Scandinavia A/S (to avoid confusion with prisoner transport) was formed in 1965, initially with DC-7s. Next Boeing 720s were acquired, then 720Bs. Boeing 737s and Airbus A300/310/320s were operated. Conair mainly flew passengers from the owners travel agency but would and did carry passengers for other travel agencies. The company has a colourful history. Like Scanair it flew to popular holiday destinations.

As noted above, Conair and Scanair merged in 1994 to form Premiair. The only photograph that I have is of an A300 in the background of a Balair MD-80, so see Balair below for that photograph.

### PREMIAIR

The Danish airline Premiair was formed on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1994 from the merger of Scanair of Sweden and Conair of Denmark. It operated Airbus A300/320/330s and DC-10s. In 1996 Airtours Holidays (which owned the airline Airtours which was based in Manchester) acquired ownership of Premiair. In 2001 the parent company of both Premiair and Airtours merged them to form MyTravel Airways. Airtours itself had previously taken over Inter European Airways in 1993 (see below). In 2007 MyTravel merged into The Thomas Cook Group, the latter ceasing operations in 2019.

*(However there is a twist to this story. When The Thomas Cook Group went into liquidation the assets were sold. A Norwegian businessman and a Swedish private equity firm bought Thomas Cook Northern Europe including the Ving, Spies and Tjäreborg travel agencies, **Thomas Cook Airlines Scandinavia**,*

and the Sunwing and Sunprime hotel brands. Spies travel agents was originally part of the Conair Group and the airline was developed from Premier. The airline was renamed Sunclass Airlines and it still exists. Ed.)



Premiair DC-10-10 OY-CNS 26<sup>th</sup> August 1997

## **BALAIR**

Balair began commercial services in 1957 with a Vickers Viking, having been formed in 1953 as a flying school. Following investment from Swissair two DC-4s were acquired for charter services. This was followed by DC-6s and F27s. Initial jet aircraft was a single Convair 990 Coronado leased from Swissair, followed by the DC-9 and DC-8. In 1974 flights to the USA commenced with DC-10s. By the mid 1980s the A310 and MD-80 were the backbone of the fleet. In 1993 Balair was merged with another Swissair subsidiary CTA (Compagnie de Transport Aerien) to form Balair CTA. After the demise of the Swissair group Balair CTA became Belair. Belair became part of Air Berlin, both of which shut down in 2017.



Balair MD-80 with Conair A300 behind 25<sup>th</sup> August 1990

## **EAS (Europe Aéro Service)**

EAS began services in 1965 with services between Perpignan and Palma with a single HP Herald. By the 1970s Vickers Vikings and Caravelles had been added to the fleet. Boeing 727s and 737s were added before the airline had financial problems, operations ceasing in 1995.



EAS Boeing 727-200 F-GGGR 25<sup>th</sup> June 1988



EAS Boeing 737-200 F-GHXX 25<sup>th</sup> June 1988

### **ZAS Airline of Egypt**

Starting as a freight airline in 1982, passenger operations began in 1987. Equipment included Boeing 707s, DC-9s, MD-80s and A300s. A single Jetstar was also operated. Many aircraft were leased in, for example the A300s from Conair retaining their Danish registrations, and the DC-9 and MD-80 from Adria Airways keeping their Yugoslavian identities. A Caravelle and MD-83 leased from Aero Lloyd remained in their owners livery and German registrations. ZAS was affected adversely by the 1990-91 Gulf War, and following problems encountered with the Egyptian government, the airline closed in 1995.



ZAS MD-82 SU-DAK 25<sup>th</sup> June 1988

## **LTU Sud**

LTU Sud was a subsidiary of LTU, full name Lufttransport-Unternehmen GmbH.

Quick German lesson:

Lufttransport – Air transport

Unternehmen – Business/enterprise

Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung (GmbH) – Company with limited Liability (Ltd.)

Sud – South

The parent company LTU was headquartered in Düsseldorf, to the north and to the east of Germany near the Dutch border. LTU had quite a high cost structure including high labour costs. The subsidiary was set up in 1983 to have a lower cost structure, operating out of Munich to the south of Germany in Bavaria. Originally the subsidiary was known as LTS.

LTS started with three Boeing 757s in a two tone blue scheme. which were actually transferred to another subsidiary LTE (more of which later).

Soon after start up came the change of name to LTU Sud and adoption of a two tone red livery to better match that of the parent company. In total fourteen Boeing 757s and four Boeing 767s were operated. The subsidiary was merged into the parent company in 1997, and then LTU was acquired by Air Berlin in 2007.



LTU Sud Boeing 757-200 D-AMUX 10<sup>th</sup> August 1991

## **LTE**

Another LTU subsidiary, LTE was formed in 1987, based in Palma and operating throughout Europe. In 2001 LTU sold the subsidiary and it was renamed Volar Airlines in 2003. However in 2005 the name LTE International Airways was restored. Operations ceased in 2008.

See NORTJET below for a photograph of an LTE Boeing 757 in the background.

## **Nort Jet**

The airline was set up in 1989 by mostly Basque entrepreneurs, including three banks from the region. Intended as a Basque airline, the original plan was to have Vitoria/Fironda airport as its headquarters. However due to legal difficulties Palma became the base of operations. The airline was very short lived and ceased operations in 1992. The fleet had consisted of six Boeing 737-400s and one BAe 146 leased from Loganair, keeping its Loganair livery and UK registration G-OLCA.

This latter aircraft had visited Blackpool on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1989 and again in December that year whilst

operated by Loganair.

The reason for the December visit(s) was a strike at Manchester (baggage handlers?), which resulted in the following moving their operations to Blackpool; Loganair with both their 146s, Dan Air with One Elevens (**NOT** 1-11 as oft written), 737s and 146s, BA with 748s and ATPs, and Connectair 360s operating as Air Europe Express. A very busy week at the airport that I just happened to have taken off work to use up my annual holidays before Christmas.



Nortjet Boeing 737-400 EC-EMY with an LTE Boeing 757 in the background 10<sup>th</sup> August 1991

### **Linjeflyg**

Starting as a Swedish domestic airline, Linjeflyg was set up in 1957 by Scandinavian Airlines System. Initially equipped with a Lockheed L-12 Electra Junior, L-18 Lodestars and DC-3s, the 1960s saw the use of Convair 340s and 440s, and Nord 262s, followed by F-28s in the 1970s. Last aircraft introduced was the Boeing 737-300 and 500, but in 1993 Linjeflyg was merged into SAS.



Linjeflyg Boeing 737-500 SE-DND 10<sup>th</sup> August 1991

### **Air Liberté**

Founded in July 1987 and also known as 'Air Lib', the airline was headquartered at Paris Orly. Operations began in April 1988 with a leased MD-83. Big losses were incurred in 1996 and British Airways acquired a 70% shareholding, putting the airline along with TAT (Transport Aérien Transrégional) under a single management structure.

In March 2001 AOM French Airlines, previously Air Outre-Mer (Overseas), was merged with Air Liberté, retaining the latter's name. By September that year the name Air Lib had been formally adopted.

Despite government aid the airline went bankrupt in August 2002, and despite efforts to keep the company going, it was liquidated on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2003. the complete list of aircraft operated is A300/310, ATR42/72, Boeing 737-200, Embraer Brasilia, Fokker 100, DC-10, and MD-81/82/83. A single BAC One Eleven 500 leased from European Aviation Air Charter, G-AXLL, was operated in 1996.



Air Liberté MD-83 F-GFZB 16<sup>th</sup> August 1993

### **Inter European Airways**

Based at Cardiff, operations started in May 1987 with a single Boeing 737-200 leased from GPA. This aircraft was returned to the lessor after the summer season and operations ceased for the winter. Early 1988 two Boeing 737-300s were leased from GPA, other aircraft operated including the Boeing 737-400, Boeing 757 and A320.

In June 1993 IEA parent company Aspro travel was acquired by the Airtours Group, and operations under the IEA name finished in October that year. The IEA fleet was either disposed of or merged into the Airtours fleet.

The A320 in the photograph below was about to fly my friends from Belfast back home after our holiday in Mallorca, whilst out of sight was the Boeing 757 G-IEAC of IEA about to fly my family back to Manchester. IEA is one of a few smaller airlines that I have flown on and experienced a better level of service than with the 'big boys'. Sadly it seems that the smaller/better airlines are inevitably swallowed up.



Inter European A320 G-IEAF 16<sup>th</sup> August 1993

## **Oasis Airlines**

This Spanish airline was originally set up in 1986 as Andalusair, and in 1987 the Oasis Hotel Group took over the airline and renamed it. Initially MD-83s were used and by 1982 more MD-82/83s were acquired. The A310 was also used. With demand for tourist flights decreasing Oasis entered the scheduled market in Spain, but losses were incurred and bankruptcy led to the end of operations in 1996.



Oasis MD-82 D-ALLT leased from Aero Lloyd 30<sup>th</sup> August 1996

## **Star Europe**

Société de Transport Aérien Régional was founded in 1995 and in 1997 started trading as Star Europe. The fleet included Boeing 737-300/400s and A320s, operating only seven aircraft based in Paris. In 2006 the airline was acquired by the Avion Group and renamed XL Airways France, the latter ceasing operations in 2019.



Star Europe Boeing 737-400 F-GRSC 26<sup>th</sup> August 1997



## **YAK Service**

Moscow based from 1993, banned from EU airspace in 2009, licence revoked 2011.



Yak Service Yak 40 RA-87669 August 2000

## **Air Europa Express**

In 1996 Spanish airline Air Europa set up a regional subsidiary to operate on shorter regional routes from Palma. The livery was similar to the parent company with 'Express' added to the fuselage titling. It appears that Air Europa Express had an association with Canarias Regional Air, both operating the British Aerospace ATP leased from the manufacturer.

Whilst looking into the Air Europa Express fleet on-line there was (as with other fleet entries) a lack of consistency across web-sites. However I think that Planespotters.net may have the definitive listing, showing a total of seventeen ATPs operated. Some of the confusion may relate to twelve of the seventeen ATPs having two Spanish registrations at different times. This is due to the fact that they were initially operated by Canarias Regional Air under lease from British Aerospace Asset Management. The lease was then moved to Air Europa Express which later re-registered the aircraft.

Many of the aircraft were previously operated by British Airways, five of which I recorded at Squires Gate in December 1989 diverting due to a strike at Manchester Airport. Three more were captured on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1990, possibly weather diversions from Manchester.

One particular aircraft is of interest to me as I flew on it, but not with Air Europa Express. It appeared at Squires Gate in April 1994 as G-BUUR, operating for Manx but still in the colours of its previous Portuguese operator. It then became G-ODEJ of Euro Direct Airlines, this airline lasting less than twelve months from 1994 to February 1995. Then after a time with British Airways it came back to British Aerospace Asset Management in January 1998. It was during this period before going to Air Europa Express that I flew on it as G-OEDJ.

G-CORP the Warton ATP was away on maintenance and G-OEDJ was substituted, so on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1998 I flew on it for a return trip Warton-Farnborough. I try to photograph all of the aircraft that I fly on, but this is not possible flying out of Warton. However several years later whilst being bussed out at Palma for the flight to Manchester, we went past an ATP of Air Europa Express which presented a good photo opportunity. This aircraft turned out to be EC-GUX, previously G-OEDJ.

In 2001 the airline ceased operations due to low demand and economic problems, many of the aircraft later being converted to freighters. In 2016 a new airline with the same name was launched.



Air Europa Express British Aerospace ATP EC-HGE 31<sup>st</sup> August 2000

### Air Belgium

I must start by pointing out that there is a new airline called Air Belgium operating successfully. This current airline was set up in 2016 and operates wide bodies, Airbus A330/340 and a Boeing 747-8F planned for introduction in 2022.

Here we are concerned with a previous Air Belgium that was in existence from 1979 to 2000. Based in Brussels, the airline started with a Boeing 707 as Abelag Airways, with the 707 soon replaced by a 737-200. The change to Air Belgium came in 1980. In turn three Boeing 737-300s replaced the four 200s, then followed by two 400 series. Two Falcon 20s were also operated on behalf of DHL Worldwide Express.

In 1998 a Boeing 757 was leased for transatlantic charters and from 1999 it flew two A320s in Airtours colours with Belgian registrations. This was because in 1998 Air Belgium was sold to Airtours and by October 2000 was fully integrated with Airtours.

Interestingly in the photograph below it appears as if an attempt has been made to remove the tail logo and titles. I wondered at the time if the airline has just gone bust, however there are photographs of this aircraft on the internet and in this condition whilst on lease in November 1999 to Fly FTI of Germany, another member of the Airtours Group. So this was presumably a half-hearted attempt to remove the Air Belgium identity for the lease period. It later appeared with Airtours titles on the lower front fuselage and Airtours logo on the fin, but with small Air Belgium lettering above the forward cabin windows.



Air Belgium Boeing 737-400 OO-ILJ 1<sup>st</sup> November 1999

## Aero Lloyd

Aero Lloyd Flugreisen GmbH (Flugreisen means Air Travel) was founded in 1980, but only launched operations in 1981 with three Caravelles. In 1982 3 DC-9-32s were added, followed by MD-80s in 1986. The airline also operated the Airbus A320/321 and Boeing 737-400/800. The airline ceased trading in 2003.

The special livery in the photograph below advertises TRIGEMA, a German clothing manufacturer. The legend across the top of the fuselage reads 'Germany's biggest T-Shirt and Tennis clothing manufacturer'.



Aero Lloyd A321 D-ALAK 1<sup>st</sup> November 1999

## Fischer Air

The airline was established in 1996 in Prague, Czech Republic. In 2005 it was re-named Charter Air to avoid confusion with its new Polish subsidiary Fischer Air Polska, but was bankrupt later that year. Only equipment was three Boeing 737-300s.



Fischer Air Boeing 737-300 OK-FAN 1<sup>st</sup> May 2000

## **Hapag-Lloyd Flug**

Hapag-Lloyd Fluggesellschaft mbH was established in 1972 when the Hapag-Lloyd shipping group bought Boeing 727s to fly its cruise passengers from Germany to the ship's ports of call. Operations began in 1973 and it quickly became one of the larger German charter airlines.

These initial Boeing 727s were 100 series aircraft, the 200 series being added later. In 1979 Bavaria Germanair was merged into Hapag-Lloyd, adding BAC One Eleven series 500s and Airbus A300s to the fleet. Boeing 737-200/400/500/800s and Airbus A310s were also operated. Hapag-Lloyd was the first operator of the Boeing 737-800.

In 1997 it became a subsidiary of TUI AG (AG public limited company). When the TUI 'big smile' logo was introduced in 2002, the almost 30 year old orange and blue livery was replaced by the two tone blue of TUI, but maintained Hapag-Lloyd titles. In 2005 the airline was renamed Hapagfly, and two years later it combined its operations with Hapag-Lloyd Express to become TUIfly Deutschland.

The subject of the photograph below does not appear to feature in any of the on-line fleet listings.



Hapag Lloyd Executive IAI 1125 Astra SP D-CCAT 31<sup>st</sup> August 2000

*(c/n 059 registered N4341S 2-92: D-CCAT 6-92: HB-VNF 3-04: LX-GOL 3-04: D-CABB 9-05 Air Hamberg until 11-13 reg canc. 1-21. As D-CCAT internet photos show it in a blue and white colour scheme then later this Hapag-Lloyd scheme. Ed)*

## **Shorouk Air**



Shorouk Air A320 SU-RAC 1<sup>st</sup> September 2001

Established in 1991 by Egyptair and Kuwait Airways and originally called Egyptian-Kuwait Air Services Company, the name Shorouk Air was adopted in 1992. Only A320s were operated and the airline ceased operations in 2003.

### **Pulkovo Aviation Enterprise (Пулково in the Cyrillic alphabet)**

Pulkovo airport serves St.Petersburg in Russia, so this airline based there took its name from the local village of that name and the airport. Full name Pulkovo Federal State Unified Aviation Service Company. The Russians seem to like long names and this airline was 100% state owned.

Pulkovo started up in 1932 as Aeroflot Leningrad Civil Aviation Directorate, becoming Leningrad United Air Unit in 1963. In 1992 it became Pulkovo Aviation and used Aeroflot livery until ordered to change in 1997. It joined IATA in 2000. In 2006 Pulkovo merged with Rossiya. The Pulkovo fleet included the Tupolev Tu-154, Ilyushin Il-86 and Boeing 737-500. You will notice in the photograph below small Aeroflot titles by the wing leading edge, so was it really a separate airline?

Saint Petersburg was known as Petrograd (Peter's City after Peter the Great) from 1914 until 1924, then renamed Leningrad (Lenin's City) for the Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin who died that year. The name Saint Petersburg was re-adopted in 1991 following a citywide referendum.



Pulkovo Aviation Tu-154 RA-85770 28<sup>th</sup> August 1998

### **Braathens SAFE**

Braathens South American & Far East Airtransport A/S was founded in 1946 in Oslo by Ludvig G Braathen. It started as a charter airline flying to South America and the Far East with DC-4s. Later DC-3s were added and in 1951 domestic services commenced using de Havilland Herons. First turbine equipment was the Fokker F-27 Friendship in 1958, Braathens being the second airline to operate the type after Aer Lingus. The first DC-6B arrived in 1961, and by 1966 operated seven DC-6s on charter work.

The first Boeing 737-200 arrived in 1969, three being ordered in 1965. Following on from the F-27, Braathens was the launch customer for the Fokker F-28 Fellowship, with five being received within a year. In 1980 two Boeing 767-200s were ordered, but due to difficult market conditions both were sold in 1986. The F-28s were also sold leaving only the 737-200 in service, with nineteen operated by 1988. From 1989 the 737-400 and 500 replaced the 200 series aircraft, with seven 400s and seventeen 500s received by 1994.

In 1997 Braathens entered the Swedish internal market by acquiring Transwede and Malmö Aviation, as a result adding the 737-300, Fokker 100 and BAe 146 to the fleet. However, losses suffered in particular due to competition with SAS resulted in the airline being merged with the Norwegian Division of SAS in

2004, the merged airline being SAS Braathens. In 2007 it was integrated into mainline SAS.

The first Boeing 737-400 received was LN-BRA, on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1989. This aircraft operated the last Braathens service into Blackpool for the 'dance charters' in April 1990, following many years of operating the 737-200 with often two of the latter on the apron at the same time. Prior to that Braathens had operated the DC-6 into Blackpool, which is an excuse to include my photograph of LN-SUK below.

As to the photograph below, the Braathens 737-200 was clearly not the intended subject, the anonymous DC-3 in the foreground having defied all attempts to identify it since. It was with another anonymous DC-3 that you can see in the photograph of the Scanair DC-8. They are two different aircraft. I have also been unable to identify the two DC-3s in the photo of the LTU Sud 757.



Anonymous DC-3 and Braathens Boeing 737-200 25<sup>th</sup> June 1988



LN-SUK at Blackpool 1972

## **TASSA**

I have to admit that I am stretching things a bit here, but read on.

Trabajos Aéreos del Sáhara SA (Air Workers of the Sahara) was formed in 1961 to provide air support for companies operating in Spanish Sahara. In 1962 it started transporting holidaymakers from the UK to Spain, but only lasted until 1969.

The aircraft in the photograph below, EC-AVA, was retired at Palma in June 1965 and moved to a location between Magaluf and Santa Ponsa in the south west of Mallorca in 1975. Here it served as a bar and was broken up in September 1998. It is a short body DC-6 (the DC-6A and B were longer) and was originally with KLM as PH-DPP and PH-TPP. There are some good photographs of EC-AVA on the internet at UK airports. Interestingly the other DC-6 operated by TASSA as EC-AUC, was the prototype XC-112A with serial 45-873, also to be found on the internet.



Ex TASSA DC-6 EC-AVA

## The End

As usual if you can add anything or have interesting photographs of these airliners at Palma we would like to hear from you. Ed.