



RCA Flying Update - Spring 2021—April

Welcome to the Spring edition of our Solent Airport at Daedalus E-Newsletter.

We hope this edition finds you and your family safe and well and eagerly anticipating some spring sunshine!

In line with the Government's roadmap out of lockdown, we are delighted to be welcoming visitors back to our viewing area from Monday 12th April.



Café 05 will continue to operate a takeaway facility until 17th May, when it will be fully open to customers once again.

At this stage we will be in a position to once again offer the Airport tours and visits which proved so successful in previous years. We look forward to sharing our plans for community involvement over the summer and will publish a programme of proposed events on the Airport website and via social media.

The airport has remained open and active during the lockdown periods serving the needs of the based Coastguard Helicopter, visiting military aircraft and medical flights supporting the COVID 19 pandemic. Aircraft movements have been slowly phased back towards normal movement numbers to aid the return of the skill levels of both the general aviation pilots and the airport operations team.

With each edition of the newsletter we will be taking the opportunity to introduce you to members of the Solent Airport Team. This time we are pleased to introduce our Airport Manager Martyn and supervisors Alex and Mark:

Martyn Francis – Airport Manager at Solent Airport Daedalus.

Originally from Mid Glamorgan in South Wales, my career in aviation started in 1991 when I joined the Royal Air Force Air Traffic Control branch and went on to spend almost 25 unforgettable years.

I was qualified as both a terminal Air Traffic Controller at many RAF airfields and as an Area Radar and Emergency Controller at LATCC(Mil) West Drayton and Swanwick (Mil). Postings and deployments have included some nice and some less so, but I look back on the time with great fondness.

I have held the role of Airport and Accountable Manager since June 2016 and enjoy all aspects of running a fast-growing General Aviation airport. I have responsibility for all aspects of the airport's activities and staff, including business performance. I ensure that the airport operates safely and efficiently and that it meets all regulatory requirements in order to maintain the aerodrome licence.

I joined Regional and City Airports at the commencement of their contract to operate the airport and have been very fortunate to be involved in a major regeneration program which has required rigorous oversight to ensure all areas remain compliant and do not impact the operation of the airport. Development has included the construction of multiple new hangars for both business and general aviation and the installation of aircraft fuelling facilities.

The upgrade of the Air Traffic Service to Aerodrome Flight Information Service has been a significant undertaking which has, in turn, provided the team with an opportunity to develop their skills.

I live in Stubbington with my wife Jodie and two boys, Monty and Arthur. I am a keen runner and triathlete and along with my wife, a member of the Stubbington Green runners. I really enjoy being part of the community and hearing all the positive comments about the airport from friends and local residents.

The past 12 months have been tough for many people and I hope that the rest of 2021 brings health and happiness to all of our local community. I look forward to many more successful years at Solent Airport - the only south coast airport with a beach view!!





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I am Alex Blake, the Senior Flight Information Service Officer (FISO) at Solent Airport Daedalus.

I have worked at the Airport for 6 years, initially as an Operations Assistant and progressing with the company to my current position.

My aviation journey started in the Fleet Air Arm which set me on a course to becoming a Leading Aircraft Controller, controlling a variety of NATO aircraft at sea, all over the world.

Part of the role included working in Air Traffic Control towers at Naval Air Stations. A diploma in Aviation Operations, combined with my controlling experience, gave me the opportunity to work for Regional and City Airports (RCA), here at Solent Airport.

When RCA first secured the contract to operate at Daedalus, the aerodrome was unlicensed. I am fortunate to have been involved in securing the Airport's CAA Licence and re-introducing the Airport Air Traffic Zone (ATZ), along with a huge range of infrastructure projects. I have also been involved in the upgrading of the Rescue and Fire Fighting Service (RFFS) to Cat 2 and upgrading the Air Traffic Service from an Air Ground Communication Service to a Flight Information Service.

Since joining the team, I have achieved numerous qualifications including aircraft marshalling, aircraft fuelling, Low Cat Aerodrome Supervisor fire-fighting and most recently my Flight Information Service Officer (FISO) licence.

The Airport FISO team is responsible for providing a professional Air Traffic Service to all aviators that require our assistance. This includes transiting traffic as well as our station-based operators. We ensure all relevant emergency services are activated in an emergency and investigate every overdue aircraft to ensure it is safe. We operate flight plans, gain joining clearances when required, document all movements on the airport site and control all aircraft and vehicles on the manoeuvring area. The FISO team also deal with all air traffic enquiries and a variety of administrative tasks such as the provision of crane and drone permits.

As the Senior FISO it is my responsibility to manage the team of FISOs we have at Solent Airport, overseeing all aspects of their training through to CAA validation and ensuring all licences remain current.

I thoroughly enjoy working at the Airport where every day is unique. The fact that the airport is owned by Fareham Borough Council makes us feel part of the community and we work very hard as a team to ensure our residents, visitors and customers have a personable and enjoyable visit. I look forward to many more years of talking to aircraft along the South coast!



I am Mark Ryder - Senior Fire Officer and Operations Team Leader at Solent Airport Daedalus

I've been at Solent Airport for three years, having joined as an Operations Assistant following a full career with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service which included many years at Fareham. I also have several years of military service prior to that.

Our small operations team here conduct a broad variety of day to day airfield operations including emergency response, fuelling, wildlife control, aircraft marshalling, security, as well as aircraft and vehicle escorts. We also deal with any other unexpected situations that can and do crop up!!

I have always enjoyed working as part of a close-knit team and I am pleased to head up our highly capable and adaptable team of operators at Solent Airport.

As a resident of Stubbington, it is good to see the long aviation tradition continuing at Solent Airport at Daedalus. Even during the time I've been here I've seen lots of positive changes and once the pandemic is behind us, we look forward to seeing further growth and Solent Airport becoming even more of a valuable fixture in our local community.



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Finally for this edition, we introduce you to a key member of our Solent Airport Community:

My name is Terry Coombes, Chairman of the Daedalus Aviation and Heritage Group (DA&HG). DA&HG was formed from the merger of Lee Flying Association Ltd (LFA) and the Gosport Aviation Society.

LFA was formed in 2007 by a group of seven people with the purpose of fighting the projected closure of Lee-on-Solent airfield to private flying.

In 2010 we hosted a fly-in to help celebrate the achievement of this objective, repeating the event in 2011. Prior to 2018 we rented Hangar B and had seven aircraft in our care.

LFA was instrumental in organising the D-Day 70 event in 2014, enabling us to host 8 wartime Dakota (DC3) aircraft which went on to do a paratroop over the Normandy Beaches. Other delights at the event included a P51D Mustang,

2015, 2016 and 2017 saw us organising fly-ins centred around Hangar B, including aircraft from France and many UK airfields.

We relocated to our new clubhouse in 2018 from which we are able to continue our support to the Skywatch Civil Air Support charity, providing pilots, observers, and flying many patrol flights over the Solent, Isle of Wight and the UK mainland.

The Gosport Aviation Society was formed 30 years ago to preserve the history and heritage of aviation on the Gosport peninsula, whilst retaining a large archive of material supported by many people having a detailed expert

knowledge of local military and civilian flying, and the massive contribution made locally to the development of world-wide aviation.

DA&HG are looking forward to working closely with RCA at Solent Airport, and to helping with the running of any forthcoming events. A diverse group of volunteers consisting of pilots, air traffic controllers, engineers, many amateur photographers, humble plane spotters and those interested in general aviation, we are always looking to welcome new members.



D-Day70 on 3 June 2014 showing Dakotas and Spitfires

LFA Member John Russell and his Floatplane visiting Solent from its Blackbushe base



Visitor from Australia Ryan SCW145 May 2017



Electricity pylon checker EC135 arriving for fuel.



Drone being used on the experimental IOW flights





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We are keen to make this newsletter available to anyone with an interest in activities here, including local residents' associations, business groups, companies based at the airport and their teams. Please feel free to share with others who may find it of interest.

Keep in touch either by checking into our website or by using our email address:

ops@solentairport.co.uk, which is the best way to contact us about any questions or concerns you may have.

With our Best Wishes

The Solent Airport Management Team



For further information or to make a reservation please contact us on:

corporate@solentairport.co.uk

or,

airportmanager@solentairport.co.uk

You can also visit us at,

www.solentairport.co.uk

**We look forward to personally welcoming you to Solent Airport in the
near future**

**Martyn Francis
Airport Manager**