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Welcome to all controllers and assistants. This newsletter is a small but very important step

towards building a relevant and vibrant association out of something that has been struggling to survive and retain an identity over many years. Why? We have highly motivated intelligent people and those with genuine pride in the service they provide and yet the HKATCA has been in decline. So what can be done?

Realistically we have all been part of an Air Traffic revolution. Not only has our traffic exploded as has our neighbours, but so too have we numerically at an operational level. A much larger percentage of our daily movements occur between 2300 and 0700. These changes have had an significant impact on fatigue and managing our personal recovery. The commitment to training new staff has been quite extraordinary. Experience levels have lowered quite dramatically with recent retirement rates. *(con'd on p.2)*

“Realistically we have all been part of an Air Traffic revolution”



“Together let’s see what we can create”

One thing that is obvious is the lack of connectivity between us as we've grown.

We intend to rectify that with a completely redesigned web site courtesy of Kelvin Chan, revitalised notice board, this newsletter and several new projects instigated by Alex Leung. Overall your current Excom is attempting to build a new platform of communication on many levels and then for YOU the staff, to engage and take ownership and create an association commensurate with the complex environment we operate in.

So rather than expand on ideas now, over the course of the next six

months we hope we can demonstrate that ideal of improved communication at work. An Association is an entity made up of individuals. The health and effectiveness of the HKATCA is essentially up to each and everyone of us. We encourage your participation, ideas and feedback. Life's experience shows that when operating as a collective you will always reap more than you contribute. So I'm appealing to you to contribute in whatever manner is appropriate to you, but please consider a contribution. The HKATCA needs YOU, not just commentators.

Together let's see what we can create.

*By Mike O'Neill  
President, HKATCA  
2013-14*

Foreword by President

## Update from IFATCA

The International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers Association has provided a major focus on maintaining or improving on safety levels at current or increased levels of traffic. Movement rates in the Asia Pacific region are forecast to increase for the coming decade and beyond. IFATCA is most concerned about the impact on the individual to handle such complexity and volume without a commensurate increase in technology, improvement in airspace design and air route intersections, a metered approach to introducing UAVs into controlled airspace, adequate safety management oversight and ongoing assessment and monitoring of fatigue and recovery for controllers.

Lily Chiang is currently representing the HKATCA on the Professional and Legal Committee (PLC) of IFATCA. This requires Lily to attend several meetings a year with the committee, review or formulate new policy to cover any matters affecting our work practices.

There is also a Technical Operations Committee (TOC) that as the name suggests performs a similar role on technical issues. Both of these committees have become cutting edge in the formulation of new policy and directions for ICAO. Through the support of NATCA, the US controller's association, IFATCA now has a permanent representative on ICAO's Air Navigation Commission. This is the preeminent ruling body for all aviation standards and practices.

IFATCA will hold it's annual conference in the Grand Canaries next May. It is an exotic location and if you are considering being exposed topical issues being researched by this body, it is worth considering attending the conference. The ability to mix with controllers from other countries will considerably broaden your professional outlook and permit you to reflect on how you and HK ATC operate.

*By Mike O'Neill, EVP Asia Pacific, IFATCA*

*"...it is worth considering attending the conference. The ability to mix with controllers from other countries will considerably broaden your professional outlook"*

# Interview with retired controller – *Neil Timms*

## **When did you start in ATC?**

My first course, which was in those days Aerodrome and Technical, started in Dec 1979. I commenced my Aerodrome Control training in Guernsey, Channel Islands, in February and was a working Controller by April 1980. I am starting to feel quite old! My Approach Procedural and Radar Courses followed in April 1981. I worked at Guernsey ATC for a couple of years before moving on to RAE West Freugh, Glasgow, Hong Kong Kai Tak, and then Hong Kong International.

## **What was the toughest rating you held?**

Hong Kong Approach Radar. The traffic and operating environment in Hong Kong is challenging. The language issues for communicating with pilots who for the most part speak English as a second language just adds to the challenge. The transition period (which I feel is probably still in progress) where Controllers realize that operating in a standard manner in a busy and complicated system is the safest and most efficient way is difficult. The professional emphasis switches from just being a proficient controller to also ensuring that we following standard operating procedures. It is very easy for ATC and pilots to step outside safe operating parameters by doing their own thing that may be safe in isolation but cause problems and incidents for themselves or others in complex systems.

## **Have you experienced any scary moment or crazy event?**

The day of the three weather induced Fuel Maydays in Hong Kong shortly before I left. The tension in the room was palpable. I would argue that this was a clear and obvious weather induced collapse of the ATC system that Hong Kong got away with by luck only. Hopefully the lessons learned have by now been fully incorporated in the Hong Kong system.

## **What is your most memorable occasion in ATC?**

Strangely not on a busy day. I was Approach Radar at the then Royal Aircraft Establishment airfield West Freugh. We worked mainly military traffic and the area was frequently busy with aircraft practicing low level flying. I was working some F111s and a Sea King. I gave the F111s and the Sea King traffic on each other as I just had a feeling that the tracks might cross: the F111s reported sighting and taking avoiding action on the Sea King. None of the aircraft were on radar because they were all low level and below RADAR cover; so this was all procedural only. Sticks in my mind as a lesson for me to be aware of where aircraft are and will be even if we cannot actually see them on RADAR.



## What are you doing now?

I am a Commercial Pilot employed as a First Officer for Aurigny Air Services Ltd; a regional airline based in Guernsey, Channel Islands. I fly the ATR72-200 and ATR72-500 aircraft. I am meeting Guernsey winter weather as a Commercial Pilot for the first time. Guernsey gets gale force fog so approaches to minimums at or near the ATR72 crosswind limit are common. I have much to learn about Commercial flying and I rarely complete a shift without learning something about operating the aircraft, Commercial operations, or dare I say it guessing what ATC might want next. I also occasionally instruct for FAA Pilot Certificates. I would hope to build the hours to have my EASA ATPL issued by mid 2014.

Over my ATC career I have enjoyed huge satisfaction from doing the work to the best of my ability. We cannot ask much more of our career than to know that we still find it interesting and satisfying even after a few decades. I do however personally need new challenges. ATIS was something I felt that I could do reasonably well and without a suitable route to career advancement I needed a change. I would return to ATC if I felt that a job held enough new interest for me. I would still advise anyone interested in ATC that it will provide them with challenges and interest and is a great job to do. I find that knowing the system from the inside out helps me with my new job.

## What advice would you give to ATCOs just starting out?

I believe that provided we have the potential, enthusiasm, and motivation to succeed, Controllers are not born but made by our hard work, and training. We learn skills, gain experience, and then judgement develops. I think that when starting out after dealing the basics of applying ourselves to study we should be alert to learning from others we work with. Usually this how best to complete a task, sometimes how not to do it.

Ask your instructors and colleagues why! Knowing why we do things in a particular way adds so much value to our experience. It allows us to integrate how our actions work within what is an increasingly complex system.

Apply the KISS principle: Keep It Simple, Stupid! In a sequence this usually means the lowest aircraft is and should remain number one. Put aircraft in a sequence one following the other. Keep actual and predicted radar separation all the time when changing levels: never trust pilots to descend at the rate that you observe at the time or expect. It is the job of the pilot to look after their own aircraft; it is yours to integrate conflicting pilot requirements.

Get as many jump seat rides as you can, and more if you are able! Ask the flight crew about what they are doing and why. Note the times of

high workload. Fly yourself if you can get some instrument experience. You will gain insight into the needs of the pilots who receive the service that you provide.

Remember, no aircraft, no need for ATIS.



Guernsey  
Channel Islands



ATR72-200 of  
Aurigny Air Services Ltd



## Visit to Macau ATC and East Asia Helicopter

The whole day event on 14 Oct 2013 included a visit to Macau ATC tower and maintenance base of East Asia Helicopter (EAA). Sharing sessions have been held between HK ATC, Macau ATC and EAA pilots to discuss the challenges and suggestions related to helicopter operations in HK, Macau and Zhuhai airspace.

## Upcoming activities

**Dec 2013** – Macau/ Zhuhai ATC visit

**Jan 2014** – ATC-Pilot symposium with Cathay Pacific/ Dragonair

## Members' privileges

**10% off** at 360 sports bar and grill at Tung Chung

**20% off** at Essential Fine Wines

*Members must present membership card to enjoy the offer; for more details visit [www.hkatca.org](http://www.hkatca.org)*

## Membership Subscription is now **HALF PRICE!!**

2013-14 membership is still open for subscription and at **HALF PRICE NOW!**

Subscription fee starts from **HKD \$50 only!**

Support us by joining the association! Application form is available at [www.hkatca.org](http://www.hkatca.org)

*2013-14 membership is valid until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014*

## HKATCA Executive Committee 2013-14

President:

Mike O'Neill

Vice-President (Technical):

Phil Parker

Vice-President (Admin):

Ivan Chan

Vice-President (Finance):

Kelvin Chan

Ex-com members:

Patrick Yam

Patrick Yeung

Alex Leung

Raymond Lung

Eric Chiu

## IN Contact

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