

Working the Grid

Dave Usher is the Senior Sales Manager for Hai Air Limited executive jet and helicopter sales. He is also an experienced pilot. GA Buyer caught up with him recently to ask about how he got to where he is now.

“A lot of graft” he said, “and a lot of flying!”. 5,000 hours, in fact, gained over the past 12 years

In recent years he has flown both HEMS and Air Ambulance missions, transporting patients in need of critical care in emergency situations. “I flew all variants of the AW109 in this role – the E, S and SP. It’s such a versatile aircraft used widely in the corporate VIP sector, but its speed and also large boot make it a fantastic HEMS/Air Ambulance aircraft”

Before that, he flew out of Aberdeen to the North Sea Oil Rigs on the UK continental shelf. “I flew the Sikorsky S92, mainly on scheduled crew change flights, but also on medevac and maintenance test flights. In offshore configuration, the S92 carries 19 passengers and is a fantastic platform for the often harsh and challenging environment that the North Sea presents”.

The earlier part of Dave’s flying life, however, was spent working the gas pipe lines for the National Grid.

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For the pilot, the work is exacting: they cover around 3,000 km a week and 500 – 600 ft above ground. Each sector covers a quarter of the UK and must be inspected every 28 days.

The objective is to identify signs of unlawful digging or building in the area of the gas pipe lines. Using a detailed digital map, the National Grid Observer tracks each and every gas pipe line. If there is any sign of an errant

JCB, digging or building works the helicopter lands so action can be taken to protect the site.

Generally, the work demanded full concentration but, Dave said, there was plenty of scope for laughs. “The observers tended to be super-cool, calm and collected” Dave said. He remembered one who was the spitting image of Sean Connery: “So much so, that he’d regularly be asked to attend UK Bond premieres as a look -alike!”

At the time, the National Grid Gas network was supported by a fleet of four Bell 206 Jet Rangers. “They’re such an iconic aircraft; statistically the safest airframe globally and so prolifically operated”.

Hai Air

Dave now puts his skills and experience to use at Hai Air. “It has been a big departure from being a jobbing pilot, but an absolute pleasure working with jet and helicopter owners from around the world. Being a pilot means I can talk to clients offering solutions and platforms based on real experience, rather than just what the book says”.

“Hai Air probably has the highest number of experienced commercial pilots in their team, both fixed and rotary wing. For our clients, it makes a real difference.”

Dave Usher can be contacted on 07803 204623 or email daveu@hai-air.com.

PHOTO: [DaveU_GKIH_HaiAir_2019.jpg](#)
 [DaveU_GKIH_port_2019.jpg](#)
 [National Grid Dawn Dave usher.jpg](#)

COMPANY INFORMATION

- Hai Air Limited provides executive jet and helicopter sales, aircraft finance, pre-purchase inspections and import/export management.
- Hai Air Limited is registered in England and Wales, number 10 85 10 34. The registered office is The Bull Pen, 41A Park Lane, Westbury, Wiltshire BA13 4NB.
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