

"Air Bristol Ltd" 1993-1998

"AB" was the first 'low cost airline' to operate in England, and was the forerunner of the more familiar names we know today, such as EasyJet, Ryanair, and Go Fly. This small independant British carrier was created in 1993 by the former executives of Brymon Airways.

The airline was formally known as Air Bristol Ltd, but initially marketed itself as Air Belfast, which reflected its then principal route flown between Belfast International Airport and London Stansted. Aircraft and crew were based at Belfast International, London Stansted and Bristol Filton Airport. In 1994 a base was opened at Shannon Airport to operate flights to London Gatwick and this operation was marketed as AB Shannon.

Once this base had been set up at London Gatwick, the name was changed to AB Airlines, as its network now covered more destinations than just Belfast. Its regular routes were now scheduled services from London Gatwick to Shannon, Lisbon and Berlin Schönefeld, and also from London Stansted and Birmingham International Airport to Shannon. It also offered charter flights to holiday destinations in Europe. In late 1997 the "First for value" tag line was added to the fuselage of G-OABA. Interestingly the fare prices were not as cheap as we have come to expect now, Gatwick - Shannon economy return fare was £198.00 and Gatwick - Lisbon economy return was a staggering £398.00 !!, a sign of the times I suppose.

After heavy financial losses, a large number of dropped schedules, and major restructuring within the company, AB Airlines went into administration in August 1999. Its last remaining scheduled services from London Gatwick to Nice in France and Shannon in Ireland were taken over by British Airways.

AB Airlines chairman Brian Beal later went on to start another low cost airline, Fly Europa.

AB Airlines fleet consisted of 4 Boeing 737-300s and 2 BAC 1-11s. In May 1998 Boeing announced that AB Airlines had placed orders for six Boeing 737-700 aircraft, making it the first airline in Europe to do so. However, with the financial problems of the company followed by insolvency the following year, AB Airlines went into administration and its remaining services have since been taken over by British Airways.

Boeing Fleet Details.

G-OABA 24097 1741 Boeing 737-33A On Fleet from 15-05-1994

G-OABD 24570 1800 Boeing 737-3L9 On Fleet from 21-04-1995

G-OABF 24688 1876 Boeing 737-4Y0 On Fleet from 19-06-1994

G-OABL 24096 1739 Boeing 737-33A On Fleet from 28-04-1995

I have included some timetables below for anybody that is interested in re-producing any of these flights, or they could be used for AI flightplans.

• Daily Flights from London Gatwick to Shannon •

Flight Number	Depart London	Arrive Shannon	Weekly Schedule (see key below table)							Valid From	Valid To
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
7L 802	1030	1150	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	28.03.98
7L 806	1555	1715	-	-	-	-	5	-	7	-	27.03.98
7L 808	1955	2115	1	2	3	4	5	-	7	-	27.03.98

• Daily Flights from Shannon to London Gatwick •

Flight Number	Depart Shannon	Arrive London	Weekly Schedule (see key below table)							Valid From	Valid To
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
7L 801	0815	0940	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	28.03.98
7L 805	1350	1510	-	-	-	-	5	-	7	-	27.03.98
7L 807	1750	1910	1	2	3	4	5	-	7	-	27.03.98

• Daily Flights from London Gatwick to Lisbon, Portugal •

Flight Number	Depart London	Arrive Lisbon	Weekly Schedule (see key below table)							Valid From	Valid To
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
7L 752	1130	1410	1	2	3	4	5	-	-	-	27.03.98
7L 754	1330	1600	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	-	22.03.98

• Daily Flights from Lisbon, Portugal to London Gatwick •

Flight Number	Depart Lisbon	Arrive London	Weekly Schedule (see key below table)							Valid From	Valid To
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
7L 757	1445	1715	1	2	3	4	5	-	-	-	27.03.98
7L 755	1635	1915	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	-	22.03.98

• Daily Flights from London Gatwick to Berlin Schönefeld •

Flight Number	Depart London	Arrive Berlin	Weekly Schedule (see key below table)							Valid From	Valid To
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
7L 339	1915	2200	1	2	3	4	5	-	-	01.12.97	27.03.98
7L 337	2015	2300	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	07.12.97	22.03.98

• Daily Flights from Berlin Schönefeld to London Gatwick •

Flight Number	Depart Berlin	Arrive London	Weekly Schedule (see key below table)							Valid From	Valid To
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
7L 330	0915	1010	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	02.12.97	28.03.98