

Bostonair

The Sky's the Limit



The Bostonair Group provide a variety of services to the aerospace and energy industries from their HQ in Wood Lane Mews, Beverley. The Group's services to the aerospace industry span three key areas: Recruitment and temporary labour services provided by Bostonair Group Limited and Bostonair GmbH; EASA Part 145 approved line

maintenance services provided by Bostonair Limited; and technical training, including EASA Part 147 approved aircraft type training from Bostonair Technical Training Limited. Additionally, Bostonair's services to the energy industry include energy recruitment and labour services provided by Boston Energy Limited and wind and solar development work provided by Boston Renewables Limited.

The Boston name comes from Boston, Lincolnshire, the home town of Sir Fred Parkes who was born in 1887 and was the great grandfather of current MD Mark Parkes. Fred Parkes had started a salt cod business about 1910, bought a small farm on the outskirts of Boston in 1911 and before WW1 had acquired

his first steam trawler, which was subsequently sunk in the early part of the war. By 1924, he had acquired The Boston Deep Sea Fishing and Ice Company which had been founded in 1885.

Fred Parkes' opportunity to restart in the fishing industry came after the end of the First World War. During the war, in addition to requisitioning several hundred trawlers, the Admiralty had built over a thousand new fishing vessels.

The Admiralty sold off some of their trawlers soon after hostilities ended, disposing of over 500 to the British fishing industry over a three-year period.

Top left: Founder, Sir Fred Parkes. **Bottom and below:** Fred Parkes (centre, front row) and his youthful team of workers at his Boston salt cod farm, pictured below, during World War I.





become one of their most important subsidiaries – The St Andrew's Steam Fishing Company.

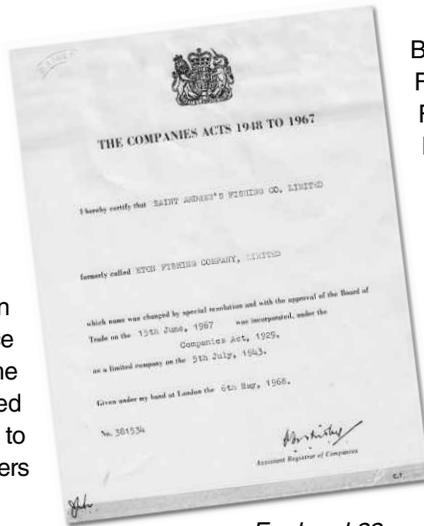
When, in 1939, war broke out again the firm successfully saved six of its vessels and their crews from Poland. Later 14 of the firm's trawlers were sent to help with the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk.

Skipper Arthur Lewis was directed onto the breakwater at Dunkirk, which was already on fire at both ends, with many soldiers trapped in the central portion. He saved some 600 men but by this time his ship, repeatedly strafed by machine gun fire from enemy planes, was leaking like a sieve. Luckily, no one was killed. Mainly thanks to fine weather Lewis managed to keep the vessel upright and beached her on the Kent coast. To get there all the hand and mechanical pumps were operated continuously, and chains of the rescued soldiers used their helmets as buckets to get the in-rushing water from the fish room.

Recognising a bargain when he saw one Fred sold his farm and used the proceeds to become a trawler owner. He bought four brand new vessels that the Admiralty was still having built, two by William Scarr at Hessel and two in Aberdeen.

The Parkes' fleet began to operate from Boston where the vessels were ultra modern by comparison with other trawlers. They were the first in the port to be lit by electricity. Older vessels were lit by paraffin lamps; even newer ones still used gas lighting.

Fred soon found himself in direct competition with the Boston Deep Sea Fishing & Ice Company. Despite, or perhaps because he was treading on the older established business' toes, Fred found himself elected to its Board in May 1919 and his four trawlers were transferred to the Boston fleet.



By the end of the war the company had 35 French-owned fishing vessels operating out of Fleetwood, mainly small wooden craft from Brittany and Normandy, manned by crews of between four and seven men. Most had made their own way to Britain, several bringing with them Allied servicemen who had escaped through France, usually with the help of the Resistance movement.

Top left: The Boston Company begins the Salvage of the SS Lockwood in 1922.

Centre: A Certificate of Incorporation of Saint Andrew's Fishing Co. Limited.

Bottom left: Sir Basil Parkes. **Below:** Sir

Fred and 22-year-old son Basil with his first company car, a 3-litre Sunbeam, circa 1929.

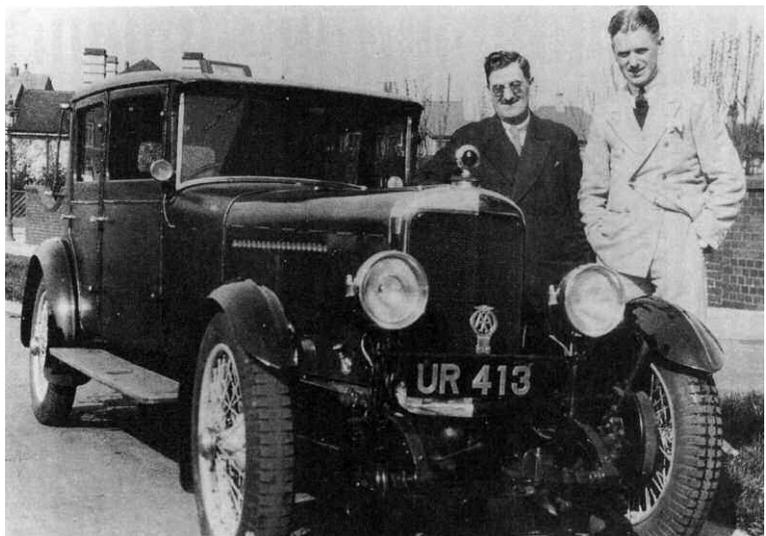
The Boston company was not in as good financial shape as one might have expected; and much investment was needed which its directors were reluctant to agree to.

Fred faced two choices: quit the company or do something about its problems. He chose the latter option.

Quietly Fred began buying up shares in the company. Backed by the bank, within a short time, just two or three months, Fred was owner of 51% of the company.



On 24 June, 1924, Fred became Chairman and the old directors left the company. He continued to invest in new vessels and now had his son Basil onboard. In 1936, the Boston Company acquired what was to





Many of the firm's fishing vessels were named after aircraft such as the Boston Phantom and Boston Harrier but in those days the company had no involvement in aviation. One of the famous vessels of the St Andrew Steam Fishing Co was the William Wilberforce, which like many other vessels was built in Beverley, the town from where The Bostonair Group now operates.

After the war the Boston Group grew and grew and at its height it was the largest privately owned fishing group in the UK and Europe with over 4,800 people on the payroll. But by the 1970s the outlook for deep sea fishing wasn't so good. Differences in business opinion led to the decision to liquidate the original Boston Company and pay off the shareholders.



From the 1980s, Bostonair Ltd's two aircraft were located at Kirmington Airport, Lincolnshire, where the company acquired a hangar and set up a light aircraft maintenance business.

Top left and left. The Boston Phantom (top left) and William Wilberforce (left).
Bottom: The St Andrew's Steam Fishing Company HQ on the bullnose of St Andrew's Dock, 1960s.
Below: Neil Parkes being introduced to HRH The Prince of Wales in Hull in the early 1980s.

A new venture - Boston Deep Sea Fisheries Ltd - was then launched by Basil's son, Neil, which operated several smaller trawlers and two light aircraft doing crew transfers. However, due to declining fortunes in the fishing industry brought about by oil price hikes and the Common Fisheries Policy the remaining fishing vessels were sold off and the aircraft transferred into Bostonair Ltd (the renamed St Andrews Steam Fishing Co).



During its history the Boston Deep Sea Fishing & Ice Co moved its HQ from Boston to Grimsby and then Fleetwood before the HQ returned to Hull on the bullnose of St Andrew's Dock in 1947. The building was built by the company and is one of the few remaining buildings from the fishing days that still exist on what was the dock. The dock was filled in and is now a retail and leisure park.





However, the present MD of the business, Mark Parkes, closed the air charter and the light aircraft maintenance operations in 1998, and concentrated on supplying engineers and technicians to the commercial airline industry. The hangar at Kirmington was sold and the company operated from a small office in Swanland. In 2006, due to expansion, the business moved into its present offices in Beverley.



In 2003, Bostonair was listed as the 7th fastest growing privately owned company in the Sunday Times Fast Track 100. In 2009 and 2011, it was listed in the top 50 fastest growing private recruitment businesses in the UK.

The business turned over only £250,000 in 1997 when Mark Parkes became involved, but that turnover is now over £17m.

Today, the Group employs some 23 staff at its head office and some 200 engineers in the aerospace and energy industries. The Group has diversified from simply providing temporary engineers to providing engineering services and training.

In aviation recruitment the Group provides highly skilled technicians at short notice to fit specific maintenance needs of airline customers, for example, modification projects such as the Wing Rib modification on the Airbus A380 or scheduled base maintenance tasks. Bostonair Line Maintenance provides a flexible cost efficient service for airlines to outsource the daily maintenance of their fleets at certain



locations allowing them to focus on their own operations. Bostonair currently do this at various airports across Europe for DHL and Eurowings.

The Group's Energy Recruitment division employs and re-trains engineers. For example, it has taken engineers who were being made redundant at BAe Brough and retained them as wind turbine technicians and deployed them with Siemens onto wind farms around the UK. It was 30 years ago that the Boston Group operated trawlers from Grimsby but now Boston Energy Ltd's engineers depart from the Grimsby Fish Dock every day to service offshore wind turbines.

Boston Renewables provides energy solutions to farmers, landowners and industrial businesses to allow them to hedge against future energy costs. This subsidiary is focused on providing medium scale wind turbines and solar installations of 50kw and above in the local region.



The Group's main markets are now in NW Europe, with Germany being the largest market in aviation. The company operates across ten European countries, with branches in five overseas markets. In the UK, Bostonair Technical Training is doing a lot of work delivering continuing professional development and type training to aircraft technicians and engineers for a number of airlines and maintenance repair operators.

The Bostonair Group serves a large number of blue chip clients including Lufthansa Technik AG, DHL, Eurowings, Air Berlin, Condor, Brussels Airlines, GE Energy, Rolls Royce Marine and Siemens.

Centre left: Mark Parkes, Managing Director. **Top left, above and left:** Bostonair's skilled engineers at work.