On 17 July 2013 the Royal Aeronautical Society held its annual Sopwith Named Lecture. Mr Craig Kreeger, CEO, Virgin Atlantic delivered this occasional lecture which was established in 1990 to honour Sir Thomas Sopwith CBE, Hon FRAeS. In the years prior to World War I, Sopwith became England’s premier aviator and established the first authoritative test pilot school in the world. He also founded England’s first major flight school. Between 1912 and 1920 Sopwith’s Company produced over 16,000 aircraft of 60 types.

This year’s lecture was delivered by Virgin Atlantic’s new Chief Executive, Craig Kreeger. He explained the current activities planned by Virgin Atlantic Airways and discussed some of the future opportunities and challenges he and his airline are facing.

Craig Kreeger reflected on his first six months as CEO of Britain’s second largest international airline and discussed his initial impressions of the UK aviation landscape. He also explained in detail what the challenges and differences are compared to the US airline market.

Craig also shared his inside perspective on implementing a Joint Venture with Delta Air Lines - we have learned that he is an expert in the field as the current JV with Delta is his second (following heavy involvement in the BA/AA JV). Craig also gave an update on the current position with Delta, and what Virgin Atlantic’s future partnership with them will look like.

Craig concluded the lecture by sharing his vision for the future of Virgin Atlantic, and his ideas for what the future of aviation looks like in this country.

The lecture was followed by a networking drinks reception.

Craig Kreeger
Craig joined American Airlines (AA) in 1985 as an analyst and was appointed Senior Vice President, Customer in 2012. He spent six years in London as Senior Vice President, International and was responsible for AA operations and sales throughout Europe, the Middle East, Africa and the Pacific. He has worked on AA joint ventures with British Airways and Iberia across the Atlantic, as well as its partnership with Japan Airlines in the Pacific. Craig was appointed Chief Executive Officer of Virgin Atlantic Airways on 1 February 2013 which has a fleet of 40 long haul aircraft, flying six million passengers a year all over the world.