

# microlight

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FLYING

## Also...

Analysing  
expectation bias

Preparing for the  
World Championships

## INSIDE

New Farm's SSDR  
and sub-70kg rally

Attempting 14  
airfields in one day

How microlights  
compare to a 747

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## AVGAS



### AI stands for Amphibious Input

THRILLING news, devoted readers: I've worked out a way to retire while still earning an income.

Let me explain. As we all know, us pilots need incredibly good eyesight. During the war, this was so that we could see Me109s before their pilots saw

us, and these days so that we can spot drones, or after we've landed, Border Force officers speeding towards us to ask why we haven't filed a GAR properly.

My optician recommends taking a screen break every 20 minutes, so on the dot, I stop my relentless work keeping you all entertained and either watch amusing cat videos or catch up with the BBC news.

Yes, yes, I know that's still on screen. Stop being so pedantic. You lot are sounding more and more like Norman every day.

Anyway, one of the foreign news items was that a bunch of workers at Wells Fargo had been sacked, not for letting the tyres on the stagecoach go flat, but using a mouse jiggler to pretend to their bosses that they were actually working.

Intrigued, I did some googling, as we investigative journalists call research these days, and found mouse jiggers on Amazon for £5.99, so I immediately used my incredible bloke superpowers to set up a Zoom call with Norman, Andrew and his boss Alistair to ask if they wanted me to order four so that we could spend our days getting our mice jiggled.

"I use one already and don't do any actual work. I pay a small frog a fiver a week to do it for me. He's called Dennis Hopper," said Andrew.

"Oh, really? And where was he for the past five weeks when you were off recovering from a back op and I had to do June MF? If I'd known he did all the work, I could have had a lie down," said Alistair.

"And a very good job you did of it, although don't tell Andrew in case he gets upset. You know how sensitive these artistic design types are," I said.

"He was obviously keeping Andrew company, advising the surgeon what to do and entertaining the nurses by generally hopping about."

"Obviously. Anyway, all this idle chat is making me thirsty," said Norman.

"Norman, you never spoke a truer word," I said. "See you all down at the Dennis & Ferret in five minutes."

• See p45 for a world exclusive photo of Dennis hard at work producing MF.

Geoff Hill, [gillster@gmail.com](mailto:gillster@gmail.com)



### Wings & Wheels, by Martin Sandwith

Evening time at the Wings & Wheels annual bash at St Michael's, bringing together aircraft and classic cars and bikes



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microlighting = an executive flyout

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who's just  
starting his  
NPPL training



# PHOTO COMPETITION

## THIS MONTH'S WINNERS

### 1st **Vroom over Vyrnwy, by Daniel Langton** (far right, top)

Daniel overhead Lake Vyrnwy in Wales in his GT450 on a flight from Hawksview in Cheshire.

### 2nd **Test flight, by Clive Mason** (near right, top)

"Chris Taylor asked me to check out his Fly Sub-70, as he hasn't finished his training yet," said Clive. "The wing was an Adam, so I knew what to expect, and I had a good 25 minutes playing with speeds and testing the screen that Chris had added. Great combo."

### 3rd **Ellipse, by Nick Buckley** (far right, middle)

"I took this in the Czech Republic a couple of weeks ago while having the pleasure of a couple of days flying this amazing Ellipse," said Nick. "I've just taken on the UK dealership for this incredible type, which is currently undergoing type approval. The factory already has A8-1 approval."

### 4th **Solstice flight, by Simon Smith** (far right, bottom)

"Wheels up at 4.15am on midsummer's day with two others from Linton in Kent, and this is Andrew Baker's C42C at first light from me chasing in my Quik," said Simon.

### 5th **Evening bumble, by Matt Gayton** (near right, bottom)

"An evening bumble in the EuroFox from Clench Common over the Severn Bridges with my newest passenger and microlight convert, Megan Fern. Even the Bristol Channel looked nice!" said Matt.

Want to enter? Send your photo as a jpeg attachment of at least 1Mb, with a brief description of the aircraft, flight and home airfield, and confirmation that you're a BMAA member, to editor Geoff Hill at [ghillster@gmail.com](mailto:ghillster@gmail.com).

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2nd  
5th



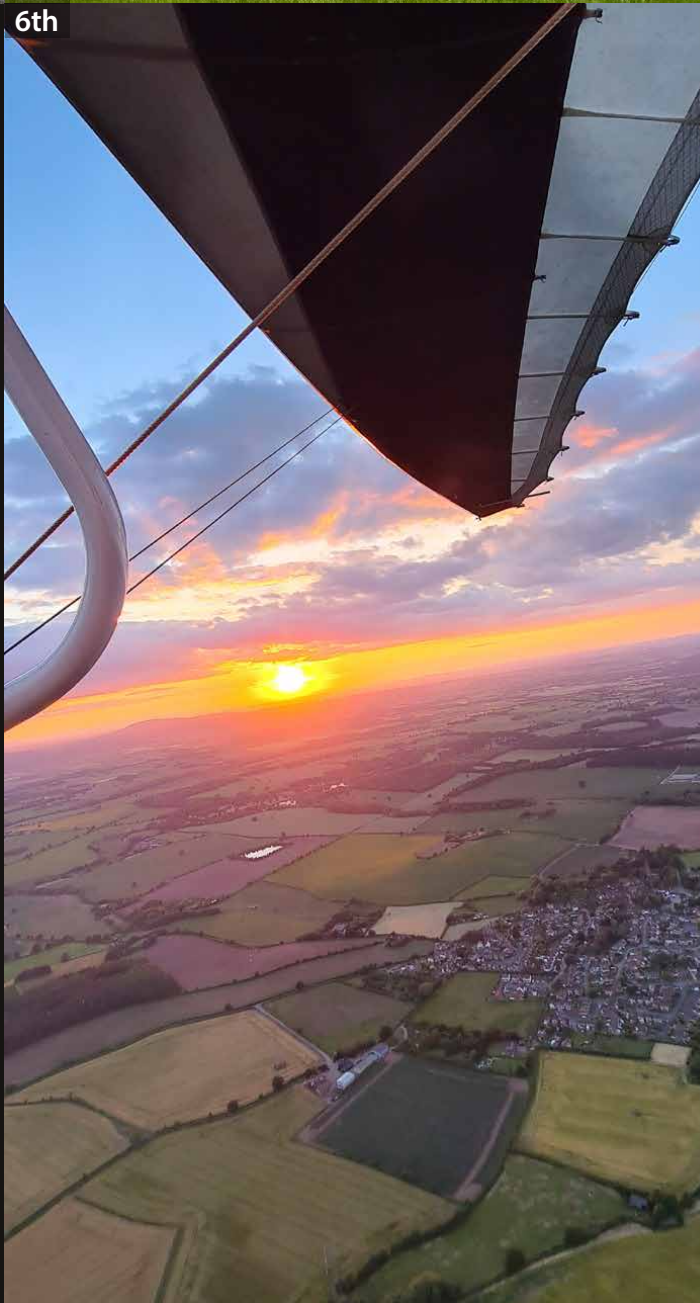
1st  
3rd



4th







# PHOTO COMPETITION

## THIS MONTH'S WINNERS

- 6th** **Sunset success, by Steve Wilkes (right)**  
 "Taken by my instructor, Steve Wilkes of Hadair Microlight Training, from a Quantum 912 at sunset on midsummer's day," said Neil Martin. "It was during the last five minutes of my GST, and thankfully I passed!"
- 7th** **Mum's the word, by Phil Rogers (above, left)**  
 "A day after my Mum Dorothy's 98th birthday, I flew in my Skyraider Classic from Rossall Field to North Coates, then picked her up for a short flight not above 500ft, as there were F-15s doing manoeuvres nearby,"
- 8th** **Wings & Wheels, by Martin Sandwith (page 3)**
- 9th** **Dark art, by Richard Hine (above, right)**  
 "My friend Al Robinson at Moss Edge farm in Lancashire, learning the dark art of fixed-wing after 20 years with flex-wings," said Richard.

Want to enter? Send your photo as a jpeg attachment of at least 1Mb, with a brief description of the aircraft, flight and home airfield, and confirmation that you're a BMAA member, to editor Geoff Hill at [gillster@gmail.com](mailto:gillster@gmail.com).

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## News

## ANOTHER LSM ON THE WAY FROM TLAC

### Bobcat beckons



AFTER TLAC unveiled the Shark at Popham, the company confirmed that another 600kg light sport microlight is on the way from the Norfolk-based manufacturer.

And this one is at the opposite end of the LSM spectrum from the sleek Shark: it's the Bobcat 600, a fairly extensive reworking of the former Clipper from Medway Microlights, which TLAC bought in 2018.

It's currently completed a successful round of initial test flights from TLAC's base at Little Snoring, so the next step is approval through the BMAA, which should be within two to five months.

As we reported in July *MF*, the Shark has just been approved as a light sport microlight, and the first one delivered to Mid Anglia Light Sport Aviation.

When the Bobcat is approved, that'll mean that a total of 16 LSMs have been approved through the BMAA since August 2021, with another 13 in the offing.

"Some will see a resemblance to the previous Medway types, and others will see a passing nod to the now defunct Bushcat," said TLAC boss Paul Hendry-Smith.

"Since its acquisition of the assets of

Medway Microlights, TLAC has been working on and off on a 600kg redesign of one of the Medway types, the Clipper.

"The redesign has been interspersed with some significant delays, mainly Covid and raw material availability.

"We're proud to say that we haven't taken the easy sub-contract route, but have taken manufacture in-house, even down to the wheels and braking systems, composites and suspension.

"Having control of such components leads to a significant workload, but out of the hands of less reliable others.

"Getting it to 600kg MTOW has proven challenging, necessitating a serious amount of load testing, all of which was passed with ease.

"The redesigning process has resulted in a 100-litre fuel system, with aluminium wing tanks and gas oleo landing gear, giving amazing performance at the higher weight as opposed to bungee springs.

"It also has a redesigned engine mount, redesigned and lightened composites,

gullwing doors with upper and lower panel transparencies, adjustable fore and aft seats and much more, including significant reduction in adverse yaw, a symptomatic issue in this type of aircraft.

"It'll initially be offered with the ubiquitous Rotax 912 series engine, initially the 80hp UL or 100hp ULS, with a range of propellers and later with higher horsepower units and variable-pitch props.

"Aircraft options will not be great, as most are included as standard, including electric flaps, electric trim system, clear roof panel and advanced Kanardia instrument panel.

"TLAC has seen the many benefits of the C42 for flight instruction and the ease of repairability in the field, and we've worked to emulate a similar capability in the Bobcat. It'll have the same cruise as similar construction aircraft on the market, so it's not about fast flight; more about comfort, handling, endurance, durability, STOL capability, visibility, safety and affordability, all in a UK-designed and built aircraft."

The cost will be around £84,000 including VAT for a factory-built aircraft. It won't be available as a kit. ➤





The lovely Ellipse, coming soon to the UK

## ▷ Total Ellipse of the heart

NICK Buckley's just taken on the UK dealership of the lovely Czech-made Ellipse.

The factory got A8-1 manufacturing approval in January, so it's awaiting UK type approval as a 600kg light sport microlight, and as soon as a demo is available, we'll grab it for a flight test in *MF*.

Nick, who runs Buckley Aircraft Finance, is just back after two days of flying it in the Czech Republic, and described it as incredible and amazing. We think he likes it.

"It's available with 912, 914 or 915 en-

gines, and with either fixed or retractable gear," he said.

"The elliptical wing is inspired by the Spitfire, and the aircraft's aerodynamically-focused design allows its speed to be utilised due to impressive stability in turbulence.

"The aerodynamic slots in the wings allow the aircraft to fly at a high angle of attack at slow speed while maintaining controllability due to their positioning, which directs airflow over the ailerons.

"It's comfortable, extremely stable and fast, and looking out over that elliptical wing is really quite a special experience as well.

"A UK demonstrator is specced up and on order subject to type approval, so of



The Ellipse in its natural element



European Microlight Federation founder Jo Konrad, who has died suddenly

course an *MF* flight test invite will be extended the moment it's wheels-down in the UK with approvals in place.

"The UK dealer company has been set up as Ellipse Aircraft UK Ltd."

## Sudden death of EMF founder Jo

JO Konrad, one of the founders of the European Microlight Foundation in 2004 along with BMAA President and long-time chairman the late Keith Negal, has



One of the 10 planned Hangar Homes at Enniskillen Airport (photo: Flying in Ireland)

died unexpectedly – just two days before his 71st birthday.

"For more than 40 years he made a significant contribution to the development of the simple ultralights into the microlights from today," said an EMF statement.

"He also made it possible to have a simple regulation for 120kg and 600kg

in Germany, and made flying microlights popular."

Jo had been involved with the DULV, the German microlight organisation, since 1981, and its chairman since 1986.

"His death is a great loss in the microlight world. Our sincere condolences go to his wife Carmen and his family," said the EMF.

Paul Dewhurst, the BMAA's EMF representative, said: "Jo was a great guy. He was always a champion of simple rules and regulations and self-determination, as well as wry and witty, and with a sharp mind."

BMAA CEO Rob Hughes said: "This is a great shock to us all."

And Wolfgang Lintl, President of CIMA, the FAI's Microlight and Paramotor Commission, said: "With his contacts at national and European level, he has shaped the development of ultralight flight in Germany and beyond like no other.

"Ultralight pilots have a lot to thank for his enormous expertise and his persistence. He initiated and accompanied all the important changes in the long history of air sports."

## Go west, young pilot

FANCY a flying holiday to St Angelo Airport on the shores of Lough Neagh in the west of Northern Ireland? Hangar Homes developer Peter Day, who's ap-▷

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plied for planning permission to build an aeropark there, has said that the plan for his Fly-In Holiday Rentals is for the 10 properties to be rented to visiting pilots.

"In anticipation of Enniskillen Aeropark becoming a reality, and the local council wanting them to be holiday homes to boost tourism in the area, many owners may want to rent their Hangar Home out short-term when not being used," he said.

Two years ago he signed an agreement with the landowner to purchase a site for the aeropark, subject to planning permission. He then had what he described as a very positive meeting with local councillors and the council's Head of Development.

If permission is granted, it'll be the UK's first aeropark.

## Biggles is back!

THE very first Biggles book, *The Camels Are Coming*, is one of 16 titles which will be reissued in hardback over the next two years.

Rights to the books have been acquired by publisher Canelo, which will bring out the books in four series: Biggles' WW1 Adventures, Biggles Between the Wars,



The very first Biggles book, *The Camels Are Coming*, is one of 16 to be reissued (photo: Canelo)

Biggles' WW2 Adventures and Biggles, Special Air Detective.

The first four ebooks, *Biggles: The Camels Are Coming*, *Biggles of the Fighter Squadron*, *Biggles Learns to Fly* and *Biggles: The Cruise of the Condor*, are already out, as are the first hardback editions,

*Biggles: The Camels Are Coming* and *Biggles of the Fighter Squadron*.

The author, WE Johns, was an RFC pilot in the First World War, then Editor of *Popular Flying* and *Flying* magazines.

He wrote over 160 books, including nearly 100 Biggles titles. □

## DESPITE THE WEATHER WE WERE...

### In tune with June

DEAR EDITOR

June produced some surprisingly good flying conditions, to the point where on two occasions I was invited by fellow club members and friends Rob Cuckow and Andrew Bill to fly back seat with them.

The first time saw Rob and I depart Over Farm in Gloucester on a Sunday morning in his GT450 for Popham.

I've been into Popham a number of times, but this was Rob's first, and he was pleasantly surprised at how nice it was, despite the café running out of food!

Both the flight out and back were as smooth as could be too, but the homeward journey was spent keeping a good lookout, as sailplanes were out everywhere.

We buzzed Rob's house on the way back, and waved to his wife in their back garden.

Then our club flyout to Broadmeadow Farm in Herefordshire for an evening barbecue was upon us,

and I got a message from Andrew Bill inviting me to be rear passenger in his much blinged-up Quantum.

And what a flight it was too, both outbound and homebound. It was a gorgeous evening to be up over England's green and pleasant land, and at Broadmeadow, we had a lovely barbecue with lots of fellow members of Severn Valley Microlight Club (the best club around).

On the way back, my new headset was working perfectly, and we watched a few takeoffs from Spencer Harvey's base at Haywood from above, then went for a play. With nobody nearby, we did a practice forced landing and a few stalls and steep turns on our way back.

What an evening it was. Microlighting brings out the best in us, and has great people in the sport. Long may the weather continue to bring us all many great flying opportunities.

Justin Parsons ▷



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**Above**  
Rob Cuckow on his first final for Popham in his GT450, with Justin Parsons in the back

**Left**  
The A417 from Swindon to Gloucester under construction, on the way to Popham





(l-r) Examiner Mark Badminton, Joe Foster after passing his GST at 74, and Joe's instructor Terry Farley

## Great show from Joe

DEAR EDITOR

At the ripe old age of 74, Joe Foster has just passed his GST in his Skyranger.

Joe started flying a few years ago on flexwings at East Durham, Athey's Moor and Eshott, before moving to Peterlee to learn on a three-axis CTSW, but Covid hampered his progress, then the flying club went bust.

Undeterred, he bought a share in a lovely Skyranger to continue his training with one of the north's top instructors, Terry Farley.

Who says you're too old to learn? Age is just a number.

All his friends and his family would

like to congratulate him after all his hard work, which has finally paid off.

Les Eccles

## Spanish lessons

DEAR EDITOR

With reference to the letter *Gen from Ren* by Keith Reynolds in June *MF*, while I agree that flying in Spain is terrific and everyone should try it, I have to correct a few errors in the letter.

- 1 I quote from AESA (the Spanish CAA): "Flights over controlled airspace, restricted, prohibited, activated danger areas and above congested areas are prohibited." A lot of area in the south is restricted above 2000ft.

- 2 Us with residency have digital certificates getting an *autorizacion sobrevuelo* (permission to fly). This is an online box-tick, with copies of relevant documents

Without the digital certificate, you may need to download an app, although I haven't used this route.

- 3 You are only allowed to import your plane for six months in any calendar year, and when you do, you may rarely be asked for a carnet, which is available from the British Chamber of Commerce.

If you are stopped for Customs duty, you can get it back on export, but you will need a *Gestor Aduanas*.

- 4 You need a medical. Your self-declared one will not do.

It may sound a lot, but it's only paperwork, which the Spanish love with a passion.

I have to agree totally with the rest of Keith's letter: flying in Spain, especially when there is inversion to keep it smooth, is bliss, and I do it in a flexwing.

Jenny Thompson is my wife, who sends in the photos for the photo competition.

Regards, Richard Thompson

*Richard, thanks. I asked Keith if he wanted to comment on any of this, and he didn't – Ed.*

## Blissful!

DEAR EDITOR

I just wanted to thank Aaron Bliss for such a quick processing of my microlight licence.

He received my logbook and application forms on a Monday, and the licence was delivered to me on Wednesday; an incredible turnaround time. If only my learning had been that quick, as it took me over 100 hours of lessons over a few years.

My son gained his restricted licence last year, and that too was sent back to us immediately.

Also, if I can just pass on my thanks for an excellent *MF* magazine. I really enjoy the stories from Geoff Hill, but most important for me is the excellent *Safety Section* from Chloe Erikson. It's great to read and learn so much from this part of the magazine.

Great job from everyone at the BMAA. Regards, Darren Scudder

## A topping day

DEAR EDITOR

The sky was the limit for the Starbreakers Special Olympics Club when they visited Hilltop Flying Club in Co Tyrone,



Above The Starbreakers Special Olympics Club had a grand day out at Hilltop

Below, right One of the happy members of the the Starbreakers Special Olympics Club about to go for a whizz at Hilltop Flying Club

Northern Ireland, which has been open for six years.

This group of athletes, their coaches and families accepted an invitation from Hilltop for a day of flying, fun and farm activities during Learning Disability Awareness Week.

The day included flights with pilots Martin Conway, Simon McNeill and Kevin Tumilty, who kindly provided the use of their planes.

The group also got to participate in tractor rides and ATV rides across the farm, as well as viewing the planes hangared in Hilltop. Other activities included small animal feeding and petting.

This type of day brought new exposures

to this group, who demonstrated great engagement and willingness to take on new experiences.

We were so privileged to have them visit and to be able to facilitate this day of fun, craic and flying, and pleased to see how this club had enjoyed themselves.

We at Hilltop wanted to be able to open our doors, to provide an inclusive, enjoyable and memorable experience for everyone involved.

The feedback has been immensely positive. Starbreakers said afterwards: "We had an amazing day. Thank you so much for your hospitality."

Michael Donnelly  
Hilltop Flying Club▷



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## ▷ More Border Farce

DEAR EDITOR

Further to my *Border Farce* letter in July *MF*, a few further points worth highlighting.

As I explained in my letter, the new Home Office sGAR system only accepts airfield details (start, destination or aircraft base) as ICAO codes or decimal GPS coordinates, and as a reminder, you can change the SkyDemon default of coordinates in Degrees, Minutes and Seconds to Decimals in the "unit of measurement" options.

I did briefly touch upon the [onlinegar.com](http://onlinegar.com) website as an alternative to sGAR, but am indebted to Cheshire Flyer Gordon Verity for highlighting that onlinegar still has a database of smaller airfield locations, so for many microlight fields, it's a much easier option to simply type the airfield name in onlinegar than to find the GPS coordinates if using sGAR.

There is a small price for such convenience, as onlinegar charges £3 per GAR submission (with bulk purchase options also available).

It remains essential that you only fly in or out of the UK via an airfield that has a certificate of agreement with Border Force.

Inclusion of an airfield in the onlinegar database does not imply it has such an agreement, so if in doubt, check with the airfield owner/manager.

Border Force publishes a list of airfields with agreements on the [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) website, but airfields can choose not to be included in that list, so again, do check, because if you use a non-approved airfield, a significant fine could be imposed.

And finally, Gordon mentioned that the gendec website that's used for Customs notification when flying in or out of the Netherlands highlights that Border Force no longer accepts flying to/from 'ZZZZ' ICAO codes, and the gendec



Look, mum, no hands! Bailey Daniel did at least take the controls to pass his GST

website currently doesn't have the option for GPS coordinates.

You do need a gendec if flying direct to/from Holland, so it appears that you need to file a gendec for Dutch Border Control and a GAR for the UK notification.

Happy flying!

Geoffrey Coan

## A Daniel comes to a judgement

DEAR EDITOR

We have two more new microlight pilots at Westonzoyland!

Bailey Daniel completed his licence in the syndicated Skyranger. His relaxed selfie makes it look like the aircraft has autopilot, but it is really is fully manually controlled.

What I'm not sure of is how his father Graham is coping with having a



While Bailey Daniel was passing his GST in a Skyranger, his father Graham was off having a good time over Snowdon



Whahey! Will Miller after passing his GST at Westonzoyland

three-axis pilot in the family, as Graham is a hardened flexwing pilot.

Hopefully Bailey will convert to flexwing, as one reason he trained on three-axis was that it was a requirement of his Aerospace Engineering with Pilot Studies course at Bristol University.

He needed 20 hours dual airtime to get the Pilot Studies part done, which he funded himself, then he decided to complete the licence.

Will Miller, meanwhile, trained on his yellow Quantum Leap. He also flies paramotors and jumps from perfectly good aircraft, thankfully with a parachute on his back, so we just hope he does not muddle his airports.

Both pilots did well, getting through in near minimum hours. AndyBuchan

## Five savour a brew

DEAR EDITOR

Of the 10 who camped over on the Saturday at Spamfield, five of the aircraft



A happy Karl Millar after passing his GST at Newtownards

were from Caunton Flying Club.

Guinness had no influence on our staying. It was all purely down to Dan Subhani's hosting skills.

The weather on Sunday was better than forecast, albeit a bit breezy, resulting in a bouncy trip back.

Unfortunately, we had to leave two members and a wounded Eurostar behind, but they returned safely on the Tuesday, minus a large amount of the pilot's son's inheritance.

Blue skies,

Dave Morton

## Breakfasts will never be the same

DEAR EDITOR

Karl "Kipper" Millar (so called because he always brought delicious kippers when he took the ferry from his home on the Isle of Man to Northern Ireland for his flying lessons at Newtownards) has already acquired a very smart Thruster

Jabiru Sprint which is sitting waiting patiently for him on a landing strip next to his home.

All he needed was a licence to take it out for a flight, and now he has one after passing his GST in the Thruster at Ards. So he can now take the ferry back to IoM and reward the patience of his own Thruster.

It just means no more kippers for me, sadly.

Ken Crompton  
CFI, Northern Ireland Microlights

## Navigating the syllabus

DEAR EDITOR

In your July *Avgas*, you say that your second cross-country nav flight was two days after passing the GST.

Correct me if I'm wrong, but doesn't one have to complete all training requirements before attempting the GST?

Cheers,

Ramesh Nayak

*Ramesh, many thanks. From memory, my second nav had been planned for the weekend before, but the weather had other ideas, so the planned GST, or GFT as it was then, went ahead on the Friday, then I did the nav on the Sunday. However, I checked with BMAA Licensing Supremo Aaron Bliss, who said this below – Ed.*

*Aaron: Ramesh, I can understand why that sounds logical, but the microlight syllabus allows a student to apply for a licence with operational limitations, which requires no navigational training.*

*Because of this, the GST can technically take place at any point, up to nine months prior to application.*

*Although common sense dictates all exercises should have been covered at this stage, navigational cross-country exercises in particular can certainly take place after a GST, as it would on an application to remove the operational limitations.* □



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**SAFETY**

# Under pressure

No, no, not the Queen song: what happens when we get stressed in the air, says **Chloe Eriksen**

I READ a lot of accident reports, and one of the most common themes that comes out of these reports, not just the microlight ones, is the human factor.

While our machines do sometime fail, it's often our reaction to the failure or our decision-making in an emergency – or even a non-emergency situation – that can lead to an accident.

I've written before about how to err is to be human, but I believe that it's essential to understand the limits and behaviours of the human brain so that we can reduce those errors.

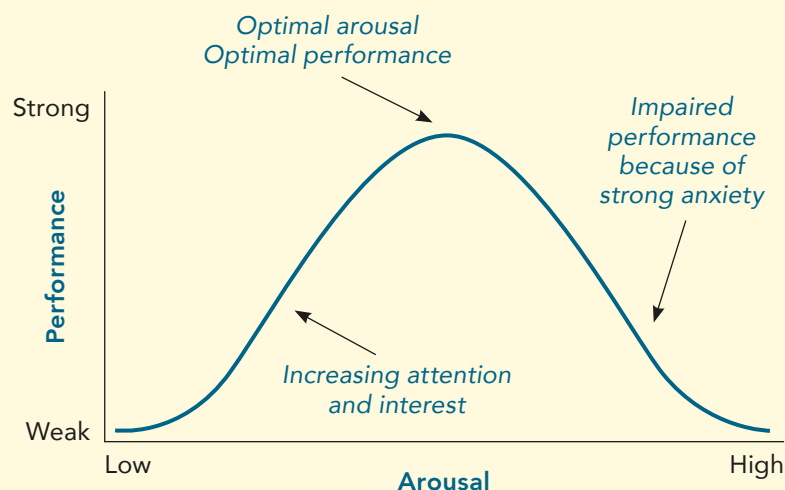
It's for that reason that I've chosen to focus a little on stress, and how we can manage it in the cockpit. Stress management is a vital skill for pilots, as we must learn how to deal with pressure and stop it from overwhelming or disrupting us.

## Stress

Stress is the body's response to perceived threats or challenges, which can impair cognitive functions and decision-making abilities. In aviation, the causes of stress can be environmental, physiological, psychological or operational.

The demands on a pilot can be many, and they vary throughout any given flight. Unsurprisingly, workload peaks during the busy takeoff and landing periods, and reduces during any cruise legs.

As pilots, we need to be able to efficiently manage this workload while also keeping something in the tank for any unforeseen eventualities. If we don't manage this effectively, it can lead to an overload, and ultimately stress. The cause of this stress is known as a stressor.



The bit in the middle is where we want to be

Flying is full of demands and pressures which are in turn potential stressors, and while a little bit of stress can be good, too much can be very bad.

Here's the *Air Pilots Manual's* official definition: "Stress is the adverse effect on the mind and body of an overload of pressure" (*Air Pilots Manual 6 – Human Performance & Operational Procedures*).

A small amount of pressure can actually improve our performance by raising our arousal level into the optimum area, but too much can tip us over into overload, and conversely reduce our performance.

In the graph, you can see the relationship between the two and the optimum area in the centre. This is where we need to aim for.

We all have different tolerances to pressures, which are determined by our capacity, experience and aptitude.

When flying, we need to keep any potential stress in check to allow us to be able to make good decisions.

The demands placed on pilots are multiple, and include maintaining airspeed, navigation, making and receiving radio calls, and so on.

Any one of these demands can become a stressor, and the cumulative effect of these demands all at once can also lead to stress.

There are various ways in which we can limit the effect of stressors on ourselves in the air, and most of them start on the ground.

## Physical and mental preparation

In order to give ourselves the best possible chance of reducing stressors, the set-up needs to be right.

We perform better when we are well rested and feeling good. We all recognise that when we feel tired, everything feels that little bit harder.

A wise pilot once told me that in terms of performance, extreme tiredness is akin to being drunk, so it's never a good idea to have a late night before a flight the next day.

This is why commercial aviation places restrictions and limits on crew duty hours and ensures that there is sufficient time to rest in between trips. It's dangerous to fly when you're tired.

We also need to be physically well and happy. Being unwell can make you feel uncomfortable and distracted. Flying requires peak physical and mental performance, so anything other than top condition means you shouldn't really fly.

In the military we often used the term "mission bubble". It was used to describe that time before a mission that should be protected from potential distractions. No one should interfere with this time or ask you to do anything other than the task at hand. This allowed the commander and crew to focus en-



Now just remain calm, old chap, and take a moment to think about this

tirely on the job, facilitate thorough preparation and reduce the likelihood of any errors or omissions.

This time was protected and understood by all. Flying is great fun, but it can also be hazardous and potentially dangerous, so it deserves respect.

Time and careful consideration should always be taken before committing aviation; rushing into any flight, no matter how urgent the task, can lead to disaster.

Experience also plays a part. During my helicopter training, I vividly recall working so hard to try to hover that I honestly couldn't ever imagine achieving it, but with time it became second nature and something I would eventually do without even thinking.

During those early days, I had little or no spare capacity and would have struggled to spell my own name while gripping the controls with an iron fist – unnecessarily, I might add.

Experience increases capacity and this capacity in turn increases our ability to cope with any demands and stressors over and above the normal workload in flight.

## Emergencies

An aircraft emergency can be a high-stress situation. The cumulative effect of multiple demands with the added pressure of time and the high stakes involved with an emergency can quickly and easily lead to overload.

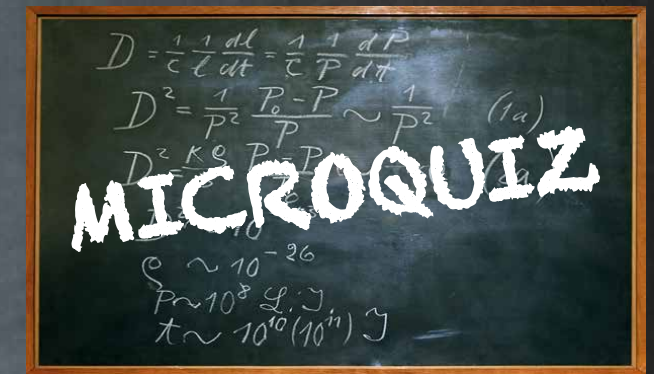
No matter how experienced the pilot, too much stimulus and too many competing important demands can easily overwhelm.

In order to mitigate the effect of overwhelm, one option is to remove the need to make decisions by following procedures. This alleviates the need for rapid decision-making under pressure, which can be very difficult.

Of course, it's not always this simple, and each emergency situation is different, but reference to a prescribed set of actions or guidelines can remove some pressure. If you're unsure of what you would do in any given emergency, talk it through with an instructor or play through the scenario in your head while safely on the ground.

One piece of advice which I always held on to if I encountered an aircraft emergency was to take a moment.

In aviation, there are a couple of situations where you need to act fast, but most of the time, taking a second or two to assess the



- 1 How should a pilot describe traffic that is 30° to the right of the nose and above their aircraft using the clock code?  
a one o'clock high  
b 12 o'clock high  
c two o'clock high level
- 2 Which of the following will always result in a decreased rate of climb?  
a an increase in indicated airspeed  
b a reduction in engine power  
c a headwind
- 3 Which colour are taxiway edge lights?  
a green  
b white  
c blue
- 4 As an aircraft accelerates in level flight, parasite drag...  
a decreases  
b increases  
c remains constant
- 5 The lift force acts ... drag  
a in the opposite direction to  
b perpendicular to  
c parallel to

MF's quizmaster Lawrence Bell is the developer of QuizAero, the online groundschool for microlight student pilots, [quizaero.co.uk](http://quizaero.co.uk).

Answers overleaf

**GASCo**  
General Aviation Safety Council

**QuizAero**

GASCo, the General Aviation Safety Council, is a charity whose members are aviation organisations. Its aim is to make aviation safer through education. It presents the CAA safety evenings, runs seminars and provides safety information through its magazine and website, [gasco.org.uk](http://gasco.org.uk).

**CHIRP**

CHIRP, the Confidential Human Incident Reporting Programme, reviews and analyses reports from pilots, then publishes them so others can learn. Get the app at [chirp.co.uk](http://chirp.co.uk).





▷ situation and calmly plan your next move could potentially stop a situation getting worse. Time pressure can be the cruellest and often is the hardest to overcome.

### Build resilience

Embracing a mindset of continuous improvement fosters resilience. We should all seek feedback, set personal goals and strive to enhance our skills and knowledge. Being proactive in learning from mistakes and celebrating successes builds a strong foundation for managing stress.

Stress and pressure don't lead to good decisions. I'm sure that we can all recognise a time where we experienced mental overload in everyday life. You can feel paralysed by indecision, unable to think clearly, or end up panicking.

We all have different levels of tolerance for different situations, so it can be hard to predict, but no one is invincible, and everyone will reach their limit at some point. The more we learn, the better prepared we can be for these inevitable situations.

Often, after the event we recall the straw that broke the camel's back. It wasn't one stressor that caused the accident, but the accumulation of lots of different contributory factors which ultimately led to the failure. It's our job to reduce the likelihood of stress in the cockpit, and this can be achieved through thorough preparation and greater understanding of the human brain.

I've barely touched the tip of the iceberg on this topic here, so I encourage you all to carry out further research and reading. All questions and feedback are welcome to me at [safety@bmaa.org](mailto:safety@bmaa.org). □

## MICROQUIZ ANSWERS

- 1a one o'clock high
- 2b a reduction in engine power
- 3c blue
- 4b increases
- 5b perpendicular to

## OBITUARY

# The legend of Northrepps

Kevin Smith pays tribute to Chris Gurney

CHRIS, who died peacefully on 26 June, was a larger-than-life Norfolk character who, despite being in a wheelchair, founded and ran Northrepps Aerodrome, Cromer for over 40 years.

Always passionate about flying, he knew pilots from all over the world, many of whom flew in to especially to see him.

In 1981, he'd been very badly injured when a Tiger Moth flown by the then Norfolk Euro MP, Paul Howell, crashed in Norfolk.

Chris, who had been a passenger in the front seat, barely survived, receiving multiple fractures and a broken back.

In intensive care in Norwich Hospital, he met the love of his life, Julie Millett, who nursed and later married him, and although he'd been told he only had three to five years to live, her love kept him alive for a further 43 years. Her care and devotion were literally life-preserving.

Chris had grown up on the family farm in Northrepps, son of Major Gurney, and gone to school in Wiltshire and Harrow.

He studied farming at Cirencester Agricultural College, and also had a short time in the Army.

Always keen on flying from when he was a young child, he got his pilot's licence early and went on to fly a lot in America, which he loved, getting his dual engine ticket there.

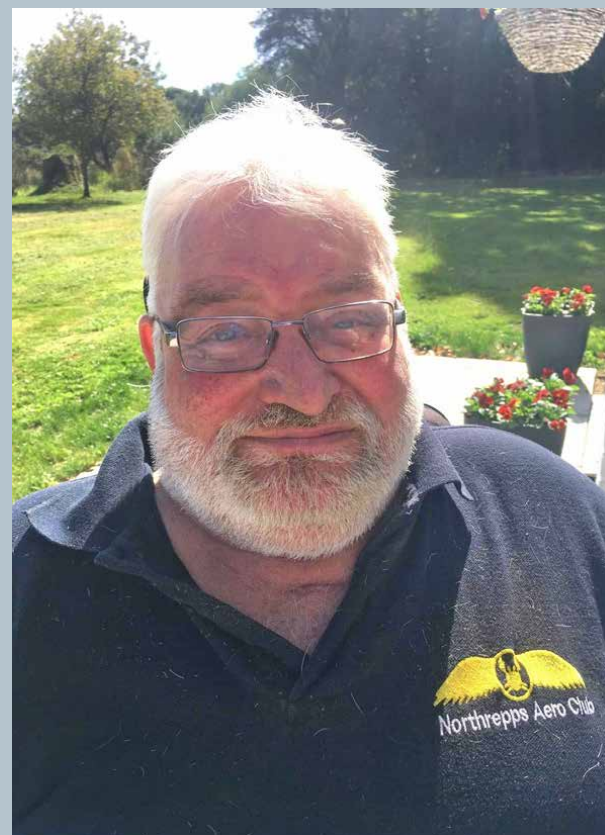
Even after the crash, Chris used to do some flying, and always made light that it was only "the last three feet that hurt".

He was always full of the joy of life and stoic about the cards that fate had dealt him and his injuries, which left him in a wheelchair.

He taught the Air Cadets for many years, and helped run Cromer Carnival. Many will miss his daily local weather forecasts, as he had trained in meteorology.

He will be remembered for his laughter and kindness. He leaves a loving wife and a lot of happiness.

His funeral will be held at St Mary's Church, Northrepps, at 2pm on Friday 2 August. □



# New Farm goes global

Well, almost. **Courtney Chambers** on a hugely successful Back to the Future SSDR & Sub-70kg Rally. Photos by **Justin Parsons**



SACKVILLE airfield in Bedfordshire was the venue to host this year's rally, following the sad closure of New Farm, as reported previously in *MF*.

The weather couldn't have been more perfect, with blue skies and the sun shining on the Saturday morning as a number of hot air balloons launched at around 6am, watched by the 20 or so campers who had arrived on the Friday evening.

The New Farm team (quickly dubbed "New Farm airfield on tour") arrived to set up ahead of a busy day of aircraft arrivals, and to keep both those arriving by air or by road fed and watered throughout the day.

The level of amazing support received was incredible to behold, with aircraft of all types joining us from all corners of the UK.

While it was promoted as the SSDR & Sub-70kg Rally, we opened up the doors to aircraft of all types, as we had always done at New Farm to encourage pilots of all types to mix in a fun and friendly way over our mutual love of flying.

The incredible range of aircraft included everything from sub-70s through to a replica Spitfire and Messerschmitt, motorgliders, stunning vintage Luscombes, Cubs, a Baby Great Lakes and Jodels, mixing in with more modern GA Cessnas and a whole raft of modern microlights.

In all, we welcomed around 73 visiting aircraft as well as a further 10 home-based aircraft which were brought out of the hangars to join in the incredible atmosphere that is really only ever seen in grassroots flying events. ▷





An SD-1 Minisport



The scale Spitfire Mk 26 landing



Iain Freestone's Sadler Vampire SDDR, which is up for sale



A fabulous total of 73 aircraft on the day



Well, if there's a Spitfire there, it needs something to shoot down, even if it's a 108 rather than 109



One of several Shadows which flew in

➤ Over 200 people of all ages visited either by air or by road, and the airfield was buzzing with a level of activity it hadn't seen for 20 years or more.

So many thanks to airfield owner Tim Wilkinson, along with Sackville Flying Club member Chris Larkins, who'd originally approached us with the idea of organising a joint club fly-in.

The SSDR & Sub-70 Rally had been one of our most popular events until we were forced to cancel it this year due to my own airfield's closure in March, so it was fantastic to resurrect an event which we had taken over, tweaked to suit us and hosted annually after the previous BMAA Freedom Rally at Enstone ended during Covid.

With our skill at hosting events and

with a joint passion for all things aviation, we worked together to pull an event together in record time, and with the weather gods favouring us, the sights and sounds of a full airfield were truly a joy to behold.

Many of the visitors had never been to this gem of an airfield or hadn't visited for many years, from when it was known as a thriving glider club and all-round airfield.

Others jokingly asserted that they were coming to see me, as apparently a few believe that I'm now famous, and of course many in the aviation community will already know of the New Farm team's legendary warm and friendly welcome, promoting the joys of leisure aviation of all types to everyone.

For those staying over on the Saturday

night, what Giles Fowler dubbed Breakfast at Courtney's made its appearance in a slightly reduced form, serving up bacon rolls and *pain au chocolat* to hungry campers and visitors.

For a first time hosting there and at relatively short notice, it was a fantastic experience enjoyed by all those involved, and we hope to be able to host events at Sackville in the future.

If you haven't visited Sackville before, then please add it to your bucket list, as it's a really friendly place where they are actively trying to encourage people of all ages into aviation in a friendly club environment.

Well done to all those involved in organising this event, and here's looking to the future. □



Well, one has to fly the flag



A nice little Topsy Nipper



# THE LONGEST DAY

Fourteen airfields. In one day. In a microlight.  
To commemorate D-Day, Chris Lent and Rob Stark set themselves a daunting challenge



Chris and Rob at Hawkinge (photo: Dave Brocklehurst)

**BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!** It had seemed like a good idea at the time: on Thursday 6 June, the 80th anniversary of D-Day, fly to a bunch of airfields across southern England that were operational on that day, in honour of the nearly 12,000 Allied aircrew who fought for the liberation of Europe.

Then enter the flight into the Pooley's International Dawn to Dusk competition, itself enjoying a milestone year.

**BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!** The thought soon occurred that we could use the flight to raise money for the Veterans Operating Base ([vob.org.uk](http://vob.org.uk)), a charity set up by veterans to offer counselling and support to other veterans in Kent.

**BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!** Behind us: months of planning and promotion; a social media campaign; leaflet printing and distribution; an audiovisual presentation to the Kent Microlight Aircraft Club; news pieces in *MF* and *Light Aviation*.

Ahead of us: an ambitious target of 14 airfields and four museums, flying from Kent to Devon and back in a single day.

**BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!**

I fumbled with the alarm. Ugh. 3.30am. Time to get up.

As dawn broke, co-pilot Rob and I were at Headcorn prepping our Zenair CH601 Zodiac, G-ZODY.

As we finished our checks, a hardy group of vet-

erans and their families, along with staff from the airfield's Lashenden Air Warfare Museum – who had provided us with much support – came over to send us off. You don't have to be bonkers to be an aircraft enthusiast, but...

## Yawn patrol

Taking off at 5.30am, we headed first to Manston, deeply grateful for permission to make a brief stop-over.

On D-Day, five squadrons were based here. The Beaufighters of 143 Sqn were soon in action, flying 22 sorties over the French coast, sinking two U-boats and three motor torpedo E-boats, with only one aircraft damaged by flak.

Australian Beaufighters from 455 Sqn meanwhile engaged a further eight E-boats off Dunkirk. The Allies were very worried about German Navy attacks on the invasion fleet. Huge resources were therefore devoted to covering both the Western and Eastern Approaches.

Our next destination was Harringe Court Farm, the closest strip to the former RAF Hawkinge. Here we were met by Dave Brocklehurst MBE, Chairman of the Kent Battle of Britain Museum. Being the trooper that he is, Dave not only opened the museum super-early, but also supplied transport.

During the war, Hawkinge was the nearest RAF



Manston at dawn

station to occupied Europe. Legendary for its role in the Battle of Britain, on D-Day itself it was home to two Fleet Air Arm Grumman Avenger squadrons, hunting for U-boats.

While there, we got to sit with a group of life-size – and extraordinarily life-like – bronze figures, based on a famous photograph taken during the Battle of Britain, and known as “The Spirit of the Few”. For me, this was a particularly moving moment.

After Harringe came brief touch-downs at Woodchurch and High Halden.

These were prototype “Advanced Landing Grounds” – temporary fighter airfields that used steel tracking for runways – and were home to American P-47D Thunderbolts.

Next, it was on to Deanland, where 611 Squadron Spitfire LFVs had been the first aircraft to overfly the beaches on D-Day.

We had made five landings, and it wasn't even 10am. But the clock was ticking. We began shedding locations like a bomber crew on two engines ditching surplus kit to stay airborne.

First to bite the dust: Egerton – in

1944, another Advanced Landing Ground; today, a tiny microlight strip.

Then Dunsfold – a real shame, as it was from here that Canadian B-25 Mitchells of 98 and 320 Squadrons flew the first bombing missions in the early hours of D-Day, earning them the nickname “Heroes of the Night”.

## Breakfast of champions

Hunger pangs quickly overtook our regrets, however. Stopping for a hurried coffee and croissant in Shoreham's beautiful Art Deco restaurant, we reflected on ➤

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The Spirit of The Few (photo: Dave Brocklehurst)

▷ the pilots of 311 (Free French) Squadron, who on D-Day flew from here in support of glider operations. I bet those pilots would have loved the chance of a cappuccino between ops.

Overhead Goodwood, with its many runways, I had a moment's disorientation

## Many thanks

We have many to thank for making this flight possible, including Jamie Freeman and Andrew Boxall at Headcorn; Gary Blake, General Manager of Manston Airport; Paul Brooker and members of KMAC; Kelvin Carr at Rochester Airport; and Ed at Branscombe Airfield & Camping Ltd.

Rob and I are much obliged to you all. The VOB JustGiving page remains open for donations at <https://tinyurl.com/mr2zntwe>.

as I orbited down into circuit. Fortunately, Rob was on hand to guide me in.

Off-site at the Tangmere Aviation Museum, Curator Charles Hutcheon showed us a Typhoon pilot's logbook which recorded a D-Day encounter with a Ju 88.

As we were leaving, we bumped into Marie Chatardová, the Czech Ambassador, who was just arriving – an unexpected bonus, because ZODY is a Czech-designed aircraft. She wished us well.

Back at Goodwood, a final surprise. Charles had arranged a behind-the-scenes peek in the Spitfires.com hangar, home of the round-the-world "Silver Spitfire".

We pressed on to Lee-on-Solent – formerly HMS Daedulus – the busiest airfield on D-Day. RAF, RCAF Royal Navy and US Navy squadrons were all based here. Among countless D-Day sorties, Seafire LIIs and VBs flew "air spotting" ops, directing the guns of ships in the invasion fleet, including *HMS Belfast*.

Crossing the mouth of the Solent, we took care not to infringe Southampton's controlled airspace, then over the New For-

“”

With the sun touching the horizon, we landed just before 9pm

est, we spied the long-abandoned D-Day airfields of Beaulieu and Stoney Cross.

From such strips, hundreds of troop-carrying Horsa gliders were towed into the air by Douglas C-47s and Short Stirlings – bound for a date with destiny at Pegasus Bridge.

Dorset slipped beneath us, giving way to Somerset. At length, we spotted Dunkeswell – on D-Day a US Navy base operating navalised B-24s, again flying anti-U-boat sorties.



The Silver Spitfire which made the famous round-the-world flight

Landing at 4pm, we were dismayed to find that the airfield museum had just closed, and with it our chance of a lift to nearby Upton, home of the famed 101st Airborne Division. Time had beaten us again.

## We'd shot our Bolt

Bolt Head – our final destination – now receded beyond our grasp, and with it my vision of a Devon cream tea. Gutted.

We were now in a race to reach Headcorn before sunset. Landing at Branscombe to refuel, we were met by Andrew, a Headcorn pilot buddy, who had flown out in his Brändli BX-2 Cherry.

Taking off together, we flew in loose formation for a while, but the Cherry is fast, and even with a brisk tailwind we couldn't keep up, and Andrew soon vanished in the failing light.

After two hours, we finally had visual of Headcorn. We were nearly home, and yours truly badly needed the loo.

With the sun touching the horizon, we landed just before 9pm. In 16 hours, we had visited 11 airfields out of 14 targeted, and flown about 400 miles.

As we climbed stiffly from the cockpit, the same group of veterans and Lashenden Museum folk were there to greet us – a real sight for sore eyes.

Our D-Day was done. □



Chris and Rob en route



Return to Headcorn, mission accomplished (photo: Dave Evans)



# NEXT STOP OMAHA



Mike Westman and Gordon Clouting fly south to honour the fallen

TWO days before the 80th D-Day anniversary, the flying weather was improving, and the idea began to form of a short visit to the Normandy beaches to raise a glass to the fallen.

Of the possible coastal airfields, Omaha Beach looked like the favourite, if a little short at 300m.

A bigger problem was SkyDemon showing large red areas of restricted airspace in force for the commemorations. Oh, well, at least we could get to Le Touquet, then have a rethink.

"Anyone up for France this weekend?" I wrote in our WhatsApp group, and of the band of brothers (OK, fellow pilots based at Boughton South in Norfolk), Gordon Clouting was available and keen to share the journey in my C42.

After some rapid revision of the recently-amended GAR rules, we stopped over at Headcorn, and the following morning arrived at a very busy Elizabeth II Le Touquet-Paris-Plage, where we cleared customs, refuelled and chatted to an Auster pilot on his way back to Blighty after a week based in Cherbourg.

Some restricted airspace had been lifted by then, and he said: "Talk to Rennes ATC, keep clear of the big red box, and you should be OK."

He was right. We coasted in high near the large American cemetery at Omaha Beach, and began to search for our destination airstrip among the notoriously dense bocage of the Normandy landscape.

Finally, we saw it, with owner Patrick Nerrant's yellow-painted Piper Cub in US Navy markings to confirm its location.

The approach for Runway 35 was, er, interesting: over the houses of Colleville-sur-Mer, across a gully, slightly left through a just-about-wide-enough gap in the trees, kick straight, touch down and apply the brakes smartish.

A little tricky, perhaps, but in broad daylight, as nothing compared to the truly brilliant night-time airmanship of the Horsa glider airborne assault on Pegasus Bridge on 6 June 1944, as retold (see Dan Snow's documentary on iPlayer



Gordon Clouting and Mike Westman en route



Mike's C42 at Omaha Beach with airfield owner Patrick Nerrant's Piper Cub in US Navy markings

and/or: [www.paradata.org.uk](http://www.paradata.org.uk)) by Sgt Jim Wallwork DFM.

As we taxied to the apron, airfield owner Patrick, a former Air France Jumbo captain, was on hand to greet us.

He couldn't have been more helpful, and found us what must have been the only available room in Normandy, accommodation having been sold out for these commemorations up to two years in advance.

In the village, many of the houses were festooned with banners and bunting featuring the flags of the Allies.

The US Army jeeps and motorcycles driving around with their young occu-

pants dressed in contemporary military uniform made for a suitably uplifting, life-affirming atmosphere; somewhere between celebration and respect for the heroes who had liberated France.

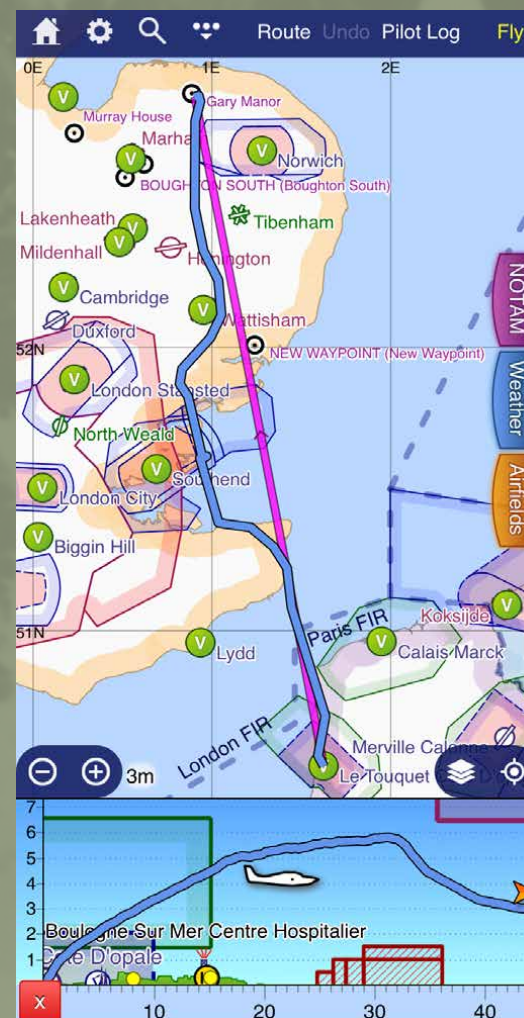
For our part, after an excellent dinner at our auberge, we walked down the twisty, narrow lanes to the seafront, and in a quiet bar overlooking Omaha Beach, as the sun set in clear, calm skies, we raised a glass to the fallen. □

• **Omaha Beach airfield:** PPR Patrick Nerrant: [udy2@free.fr](mailto:udy2@free.fr) or mobile +00 33 6 8016 3879.

• **Accommodation:** Chambres d'Hôtes Le Clos Tassin, Colleville-sur-Mer.



An Auster at Le Touquet on the way back to Blighty



The route



Arromanches



Many houses in the area were appropriately decorated to honour liberation



Gordon Clouting



# Discerning dudes on tour

Microlighting = sleeping under wing with earwigs and rising damp.  
David Creedy microlighting = an executive flyout



The chaps with  
their minders

TWO Eurostars, piloted by me and Gordon Verity with our better halves on board, trekked down a grey Manchester corridor in search of elusive sun.

Grey soup swaddled us until way past the Malverns, but at least at Oaksey Park we were greeted warmly, rapidly refuelled, downed a quick cuppa and made ready for the short hop to Wadswick for an overnight stay in Bath.

Henrietta House is a bijou hotel with a classic Bath stone exterior, a modern interior and a compact but habitable room. Bath was pleasant but cold, and a Turkish restaurant failed to meet expectations.

Back at delightful Wadswick the next morning, we chatted to inbound pilots and dallied a little longer in the hope of an improvement in visibility, then, with no excuses left, rose into the opaque air and headed for Cornwall.

Conditions ranged from a little hazy to excessively hazy, and the Bristol Channel to starboard was delicately dressed with low-level cotton.

Newquay ATC told us to stay away from the runway centreline and orbit so as not to obstruct a potential go-round by an inbound jet.

As we were finally released to resume a coastal route, we heard the pilot telling ATC where he was going to park. A little cheeky, we thought. Later, we learned that a Prince of the Realm was on board.

Refuelling at Perranporth, I forgot to replace my filler cap and didn't notice until reaching the visitor parking area. As I walked back to the pumps, the sight of a small black object on the asphalt brought a sigh of relief.

Our hotel, The George, was not far from the airfield in a straight line, but access was by a road with no pavement or verges, and used by the locals as a race track, so the CFI kindly gave us a lift. The Finnish-Swedish-Irish host welcomed us with a special offer on bottled beers which we couldn't refuse.

The next day, we crossed to the south coast of Cornwall and flew along the sea edge to Bolt Head.

I'd never been to the airfield before, and started a long, slow descent, expecting to drop into a field at any moment. Then my wife spotted the clear runway markings and directed me towards the distant threshold which was so obvious only a man couldn't see it.



Perranporth

After numerous calls, we got a taxi from Riddell Executive Cars for a very modest fee, and a classy executive limo carried us to the upmarket Harbour Hotel in Salcombe, with the driver insisting on carrying all our bags to reception.

Gordon had booked the cheapest rooms available, but on arrival cheekily asked if an upgrade was possible; thus, we found ourselves with a balcony, a sea view and a carafe of local gin. Ice and lemon were delivered, and we relaxed in unashamed luxury.

Two nights were spent at this heavenly location, and we toured the Kingsbridge Estuary on an informative boat trip, looked at shops, explored the town and enjoyed various cafés, restaurants and bars.

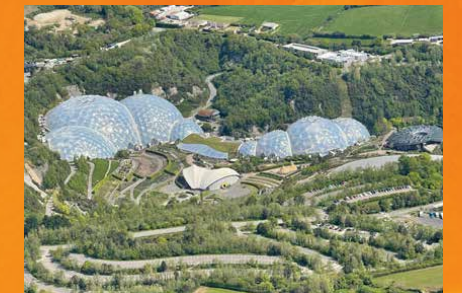
We returned to the airfield, again in a limo, this time driven by the owner's 19-year-old son, who was very interested in our aircraft.

This is a popular airfield, and there was a steady procession of arrivals. Airborne, we set course for the Bristol Channel, visibility steadily improved from poor to adequate as we tracked the spectacular Wye Valley, and we landed for fuel and food at an unexpectedly quiet Shobdon.

A crisis was developing as we departed: an inbound aircraft had suffered a failure of navigation equipment, and the pilot was lost. Shobdon Information took control, descriptions of landmarks were



Leaving Salcombe



The Eden Project

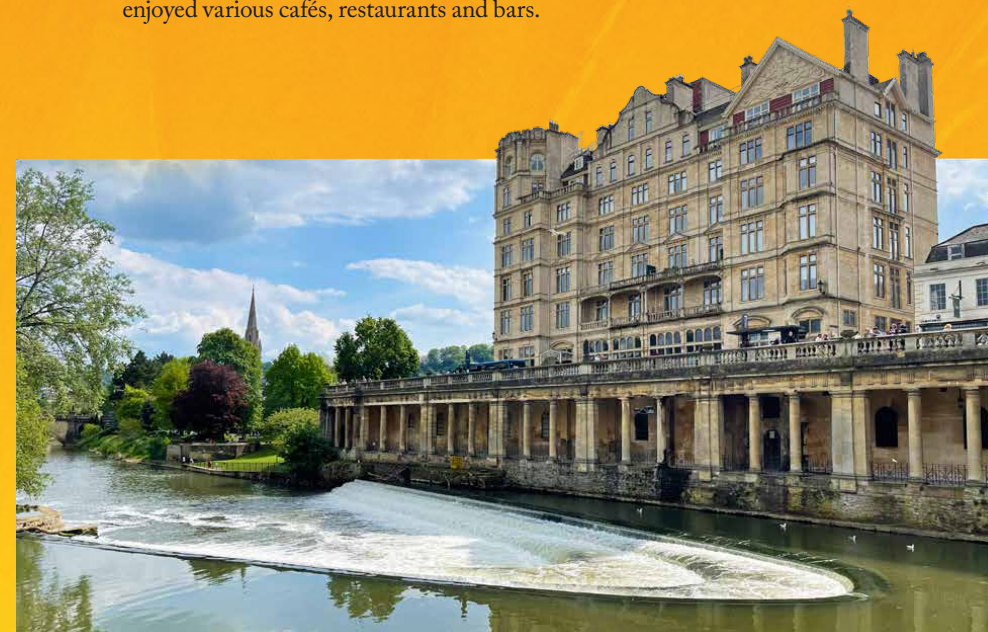
exchanged, and eventually, the lost pilot found his way home.

On leaving Shobdon, my aircraft was also impacted by an avionics meltdown. Our first thought was to blame the Van Allen belts which had been producing extraordinary Aurora Borealis manifestations in the UK and which can disrupt communications.

An alternative explanation was that I had forgotten to switch on the charger circuit at start-up.

The tired travellers landed at Hawksview, put the planes to bed and shot off to the local for essential hydration. □

• A version of this story appeared in Cheshire Flyer.



Bath



Salcombe



# How hard can it be?



Very, says Deepak Mahajan, as he and Adrian Jones prepare for total global domination at the World Championships

I HAD the most perfect approach set up for landing on the 125m “deck”.

The approach angle was just right on the aiming point of the uphill runway, the windsock said less than 5kt, and the speed was right on the button at 40kt.

Flaps were down, airbrakes extended, the motor nicely ticking over at idle and the mainwheels looking good to touch down on the first 5m of the landing box.

What could possibly go wrong?

A whisper of a devilish dervish, that’s what. It lifted us up just a little bit, then the sneaky ground effect overcame the drag from the airbrakes and gently put our Pipistrel Alpha down beyond the scoring lines. My, what an experience a microlight competition is! Mind you, I’d

never taken part in the BMAA Open Series before, so was considered a novice pilot even in Rounds Two and Three.

My friend Adrian Jones had flown his immaculate Shadow in Round One at Over Farm, and I’d flown in to watch.

My company, Fly About Aviation, is one of the sponsors of WMC 2024 (which everyone knows is being held at Deenethorpe from 27 July to 4 August), so I thought I may as well go and see what an event is like.

As a flying instructor with many years and many thousands of flying hours on various microlight types, I consider myself to be a competent pilot, but the level of piloting skill I witnessed at Over Farm was an eye-opener.

Even, so, in my naivety I thought: I can do this, and better!

After speaking to several pilots who I know well and the organisers of the competition, I was emboldened to enter the Open Series.

I convinced Adrian to be my navigator, since he has so much more experience of competing and winning, and knows the strategies and tactics used.

It made sense to fly the Pipistrel Alpha that we market and sell in the UK and Eire, so Adrian sent me some previous tasks to learn. It was so easy, I said to myself, and I could do this; until my first practice flight with Adrian from his farm strip, at which point I deleted the word “easy” from my flying vocabulary.



The dynamic duo ready for action

## I think I’m going mad

No GPS! No blue line to follow! No SkyDemon! OMG – I had to use a paper map with a line drawn on it, following ground features and identifying landmarks such as power lines and railway tracks, then spotting grand houses as turnpoints. What kind of crazy flying was this?

It brought back memories of my flights in powered hang gliders across India in the 1980s and early 1990s.

Aviation maps were prohibited for sale to civilians, so I had to follow roads and railway lines, staying away from any airports.

Sometimes I had to land on country roads with little traffic and ask passing cyclists the name of the village and directions to my destination town.

Ah, the freedom to fly anywhere, with the risk of getting stuck due to weather or an outlanding, then taking days and days to return home!

## Our first test

Adrian and I entered as a duo in Round Two at Deenethorpe and Round Three at Preston Capes... and boy, was it hard work: understanding the rules, the tasks, the mission, the tactics to be used to score most, the map reading, the weather complications, the spotting of photo markers, the accurate flying to get the fuel burn to match the declared fuel consumption, the spot landings and the stopping in the box.

I have a unique selling point for my students, called Tour & Train, where I take them around the UK and Europe while they are learning to fly.

This involves a lot of route planning, departure procedures, weather condi-

tions and assessments, alternate routes, diversions, arrival procedures and safe landings. It takes us over several countries and a variety of terrains.

But I was totally unprepared for the competition tasks set around a small area, with a flight time of under two hours. The intensity of concentration required while flying slowly to look out for waypoints, which usually consist of minor road crossings or disused railway and power line crossings, was more than that required for international flights.

It was so easy to fall into the trap of thinking that I was lost, until the identification of the next waypoint.

And usually I find the time to take lots of photos during any flight, as the flying itself is almost automatic, but identifying land features from the photos given by the competition director was very difficult.

Adrian and all the other experienced competition pilots were very gracious

in sharing with the newbie their knowledge of tactics, tricks and tips on how to manage the cockpit workload, and their ideas and designs of cockpit map holders, marker pens, masking tape, stopwatches and other allowed gadgets gained over their experiences of participating and winning competitions.

Once the task is given to the competitors, they have about 45 minutes to plan, prepare and declare their timing to start and complete the task to the nearest minute, or fuel burn expected to the nearest litre. There are penalty points when these pre-declared times or burns are not accurate enough.

You also have to fly through hidden gates to gain points, and the gate radius is 250m. That may seem large enough, but at 1000ft, the top of the 250m cone is very small indeed.

## The easy bit isn’t

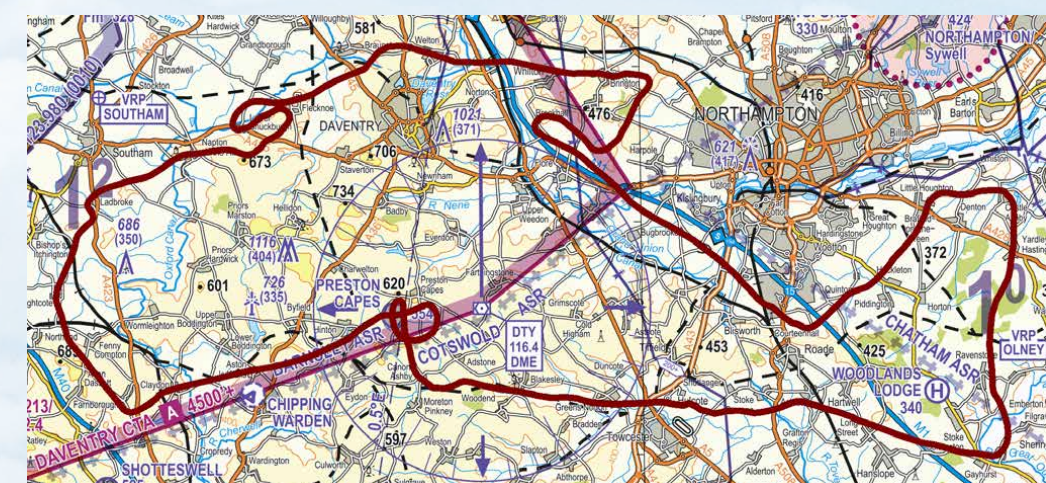
The simplest task is the spot landing in the 125m box – or so I thought until I tried it. I missed the landing spot and forgot to apply the brakes, thus overshooting the stop marker, getting zero points. Adrian wasn’t happy at all at my carelessness.

I came home from the two competitions with my head buzzing with the thought that there is still something I can learn to improve my flying skills, rather than resting on my flying hours and aerial tours.

I now highly recommend this kind of immersive flying to my ex-students and bored club pilots who allow their hard-earned flying skills to atrophy by doing the same sorties to their favourite aerodrome.

Since the UK is host to WMC 2024, this is an event not to be missed, so come ye all to witness the experts from all over Europe in their flying machines.

I just hope not to come last of the lot. □



Deepak, we’ve warned you before about leaving spaghetti all over the chart



# JUMBOS TO FOXBATS

Graham Mounsey has flown everything from Boeing 747s to microlights. We asked him if he'd noticed any difference at all

THE lightest aircraft I've flown was 89kg (including me), and the heaviest almost 400,000kg.

Pilots, both microlight and airline, sometimes ask me to compare flying the likes of our syndicate's lovely Aeroprakt Foxbat with flying a Boeing 747.

Editor Geoff promised me that if I answered this question and described my aviation ups and downs for *MF*, he'd ensure I'd achieve global fame and glory.

Despite this dodgy claim, I agreed, as we all owe a great debt to him and our hardworking BMAA Council members and staff.

So I'll describe how I came to fly such a diverse range of aircraft, make some comparisons, see if there are any tips from large jet flying for us in microlights, and finally give an opinion on which is best.

## Early years – and a career switch

As a child, I loved paper planes and model gliders. One of my earliest "Eureka!" moments was watching in amazement as a balsa glider, hand-thrown down a slope,

Graham by a 747 nosewheel, showing the huge scale of everything on the 747

climbed and soared far higher than the hilltop, finally landing several minutes later a quarter of a mile away.

I've been fascinated by the sky, flying, and meteorology ever since.

At 18, seeing that pilot training required Monopoly money which I didn't have, and that BA had just closed their cadet scheme, I discounted an aviation career, turned to another great interest and took a biology degree.

I didn't join the University Air Squadron, as I didn't think I could ever shoot anyone, only to discover years later that most of those who did got free squadron flying and had no intention of ever shooting anyone either. I took part in a couple of scientific research projects, then taught biology for three years. I loved sharing my passion for science and nature with enthusiastic young people, but I still had an eye out of the window every time an aircraft flew past. I expect many *MF* readers will identify with this.

I first took to the air in early paragliders (that's the 89kg one) and sailplanes, but the "Sliding Doors" moment was a chance conversation with an airline pilot while helping to launch gliders at Lasham.

It turned out that he travelled all over the world, had much more time off than me, and was paid much more – to fly a plane!

To pay for my power flying, I sold my



In the Mourne Mountains in Northern Ireland in the Foxbat

very dilapidated semi on a run-down estate which I shared with three students, ran the credit cards up to the hilt (I was a creditworthy teacher after all) and then resigned from my job.

## Moving on up

After converting to aircraft which actually had an engine, I instructed on Cheetahs, Cherokees and Warriors, then flew commercially on two-engined Shorts 360 "Sheds", Fokker F27 Friendships, BAe HS748 "Budgies", four-engined BAe 146



Mexican standoff with another 747 in Boston (It was just about to taxi off to the left)



## Any of us could fly a 747

Whisperjets and finally British Airways 747-400 Jumbos.

Each time I moved to a larger aircraft, the size difference seemed daunting. Of the 36-seater Shed, I told friends: "It's absolutely huge, you can actually walk under the wing without bending over, and it even has a toilet!"

And of the 747: "You can walk under the fuselage without bending over!"

It has 13 toilets, if you were wondering, and unlike the Shed's they don't even leak upwards during negative G. Each time I moved up, in both senses, my instructors would say: "Don't be intimidated, it's still just a plane."

## Farewell to all that

Along with BA's "Queen of the Skies", I retired during the Covid pandemic. Keen to keep flying, but not being fond of the poor visibility, cost or carbon footprint of the usual SEPs little changed in half a century, I went straight to top-notch instructor and absolute gentleman Ken Crompton of Northern Ireland Microlights at Newtownards, where I became his approximately 200th student.

I was hooked after the first circuit in the Thruster. What a short takeoff roll! What a view, and at roughly one

mile per minute instead of nine, there was time to enjoy it. It was still "just a plane", and I felt completely at home in minutes, bar the clenching discomfort of descending below 80ft without flaring.

I then joined a friendly local syndicate of 20 like-minded BMAA members with a Skyranger Swift, an Aeroprakt Foxbat and a TL Sting.

## 747 vs Foxbat

Let's compare the BA 747 with our Foxbat. The MTOW of the Jumbo is almost 1000 times more.

The pressurised widebody has four Rolls-Royce RB211 engines. It has 18

wheels, with tyres rated up to 235mph, comprising two nosewheels and 16 mainwheels, eight of them steerable, spoilers, and both leading and trailing edge flaps.

It lifts off at five times the speed of a Foxbat after almost a whole minute of takeoff roll, then climbs clean at 4000ft/min and, depending on cabin configuration, it takes around 400 passengers and 18 crew.

It cruises over five times faster and its approach speed is triple that of the Foxbat.

On the ground, the pilot's eye height is roughly that of a three-storey building. Despite these colossal differences,▷



Skyranger Swift over the Giant's Causeway





Graham landing at San Diego – a steep approach over buildings onto a short runway (not a truck)



A thunderstorm at night over Canada

▷ that adage still applies: “It’s still just a plane.” Assuming all systems are working normally and in decent weather, any of us armed with an NPPL and a few tips along the way could perform a takeoff in a jumbo, fly it around and do an approach and landing.

### Briefing: we all do it

Before flight, 747 and microlight pilots consult the same material as one another: Notams, weather and the aircraft maintenance log.

The most significant difference I see between the two worlds is in preflight briefing, on which we leisure pilots tend to take less time.

Airline pilots revise emergency drills every flying day. Before every single flight they’ll review the departure and identify what threats are specific to it, eg weather, traffic, terrain, complicated taxi route, tiredness, lower than usual recency, potential for distractions, unfamiliarity with the airport etc.

Most importantly, they brief on how exactly they are going to mitigate each of the threats they’ve identified.

### Taxiing is fun!

Taxiing a 747 is fun! It’s been compared to guiding an aircraft which is as wide as a football pitch while looking out of an attic window.

You can look down on some terminal buildings, and the topsides of “light twins” like the Boeing 777 and the Airbus A350.

With the exception of a tiller for sharper corners, the controls are the same as those of a microlight.

The pedals steer the nosewheel, and like our TL Sting, there are differential toe brakes above the rudders, although

differential braking is rarely used.

The nosewheel is over 2m behind you, the main gear almost 30m behind that, and the tail 40m behind that again.

Apart from the enormous size difference, however, the considerations are the same on the Foxbat: always think what’s behind you before applying power, stay on taxiway centrelines except with very

great care, and don’t relax before takeoff or after landing.

Above all, taxi slowly. Unlike a Jumbo, microlights don’t have a backup brake system, and if you do make a mistake, it’s better to do it slowly.

### Taking off

A 747 takeoff is performed just as it is



At Glenforsa with the Foxbat after a flight there with MF Editor Geoff Hill



Las Vegas



At Orlando in a Phoenix, the US version of the Lambada microlight



A 182kt crosswind. Not recommended in a Foxbat



Glenforsa from the Foxbat

on a Foxbat, simply by selecting takeoff flap (it has one flap lever like a microlight, despite having both leading- and trailing-edge flaps), applying takeoff power, checking normal parameters and acceleration, using into-wind aileron, maintaining the centreline with rudder and rotating at the appropriate speed.

“Autotakeoff” is not an option: it’s always manual. The only really big difference is that the 747 pilot continues the takeoff roll if an engine fails once insufficient runway remains on which to stop; a point confirmed in advance by the V1 calculation.

### In the air

In flight, the four thrust levers are used just like one throttle. The controls are slightly heavier in the 747, and the response rate is slower, but 747 and microlight pilots could quite easily fly one another’s aircraft around at lower levels.

If you apply right aileron in a Jumbo and just keep it there, it will turn upside down just like a microlight, as demonstrated by an intruder into the cockpit of a BA Nairobi flight in December 2000, before flight deck doors were locked. More modern airliners also have fly-by-wire protections.

In recent years, our electronic flight bags with moving maps linked to an electronic conspicuity device have even overtaken the capabilities of the map and traffic displays on 747s. This is fantastic, but discipline is required to do a good lookout before consulting the display.

In microlights, we don’t always have the additional luxury of ATC, or a second pilot watching out for non-EC traffic, drones or birds.

Flying a 747 at high cruise levels is different. There can be very little gap between the stalling speed, typical cruising Mach of 0.85 and the maximum Mach speed. Even a fairly small manual pitch ▷



▷ up can cause a stall, or a small pitch down, a Mach speed exceedance. The autopilot and autothrottle are usually, though not exclusively, used.

### Approach

Manually-flown visual approaches are often done in a 747, just as in microlights, especially in low-traffic remote locations such as Indian Ocean islands, but also in the USA where ATC encourage you to “go visual” to relieve them of the responsibility of providing vectors or traffic separation.

Airliner or Foxbat, approach and landing checklists are done at a similar time prior to arrival. Unlike some microlight pilots, however, airline pilots will always use a checklist, even though they may have 24,000 hours and fly several times every day.

In response to research showing that unstable approaches are a common cause of incidents such as hard landings and overruns, 747 pilots are mandated to go around if at 1000ft agl (one minute out) they don't have the gear and landing flaps down or aren't on the correct approach slope with correct speed and power set.

If the landing flap isn't set until 999ft and a go-around isn't flown, the pilots must report this (an aircraft computer already will have anyway) and go to management to “discuss”.

There's no shame or come back for going around. We microlight pilots could usefully adapt this to 300ft agl, a similar time to landing, so if we are not at approach power, on speed and “on slope” with landing flap set, mandate ourselves to go around.

This helps to avoid unstable changes of pitch, power and trim before landing and the distracting “will I, won't I” decision-making.

### Landing

Although the 747 can autoland if the airport has an instrument landing system which is accurate enough, landing is the most fun bit and skills need to be maintained, so manual landings are almost always done. The exceptions are when pilot recency, aircraft or airport system testing, poor weather or non-normal situations demand it.

Unlike Airbus jets, but just like microlights, manual thrust is almost always used for landing a 747.

The greatest contrast in the Jumbo is the eye height, most evident near the ground. The flare is commenced at a wheel height of about 40ft but the pilot's eyes are over 40ft above that again, at 80ft on the upper deck.

Automatic height callouts are useful, but sometimes fail, so caution is required.



Graham in the engine in Buenos Aires. He did get out before it started

The 747 is “flown on”, not held off until minimum speed like a microlight; every second of float eats up 70m of runway!

### Which is best to fly?

The experience of pushing forward four thrust levers, hearing jet engines spooling up to a roar, feeling the push on your back until you are going faster than a flat out F1 car, then pulling smoothly back to lift off and sweep past Sydney Harbour Bridge, Table Mountain, the Golden Gate, the Cascades, the Grand Canyon or coral atolls can never be forgotten.

Gazing down on the Himalayan Hindu

Kush, Uluru, Greenland or the Sahara, or looking up in the high Arctic to watch the aurorae and meteors for hours is a very, very rare privilege.

But last Saturday, I flew a microlight from Newtownards to Skye on a day and time of my own choice without having to spend time away from my wife Jane and not exhausted from jet lag.

I banked left and right exploring on a whim, climbed over beautiful sunlit rocky peaks, swooped down emerald glens with sparkling waterfalls and soared the face of the Cuillins where eagles fly. I wouldn't swap that for anything! □

# Oh dear, how did that happen?

Expectation bias in flying is potentially dangerous, says Dr Peter Griffiths

HUMANS don't just see, hear, feel, taste or touch: they judge or evaluate stimuli coming in from the senses according to personal experience and memory.

We call this second stage of sensory information “processing perception”, to distinguish it from the first stage of unalloyed sensation.

How people construe sensory information varies within and between individuals, depending on their knowledge, mood and the situation giving rise to the input.

Thus, my daughter, as a child, saw a windsock as a flying sock, while you or I would see it as a wind-direction indicator.

Or an artist might see puffy midday clouds as romantic, but you or I as signs of thermals and a potentially bumpy flight.

### I think, therefore it is

One of the first things a trainee psychologist learns is that we tend to perceive what we expect, whatever the sensory input.

In aviation, with its reliance primarily on vision and hearing in a dynamic environment, we are at risk of seeing or hearing what we anticipate to be the case, rather than appraising the array of often complex features actually impinging on our senses.

This phenomenon has been recognised since the 1960s in science – and well before in literature – and is now termed expectation bias.

The term confirmation bias is sometimes used interchangeably, but strictly speaking this refers to how people seek evidence that is consistent with their entrenched beliefs, rather than their percepts in the here-and-now: smokers upholding cancer-free smokers to justify their habit, for example.

Increasingly, in recent years expectation bias has been the subject of discussion in aviation publications and videos, as it can be a source of pilot error or even a prelude to disaster.

### It can be fatal

In commercial flying, expectation bias was thought to underlie the fatal crash of Spanair Flight 5022 at Madrid in 2008.

A technical fault prevented the initial takeoff. The aircraft taxied from the runway for repair, then made a second departure.

The flight crew assumed the flaps and slats were configured correctly as for the first attempt, failed to notice they were not deployed properly and began the ground roll with insufficient lift from the wings.

Shem Malmquist recounts a near-crash due to expectation bias by the crew of an A-300 approaching Miami in 1997, who had idled the throttles but maintained level flying.

Their airspeed reduced because of lack of thrust and the airframe started to shake, but because the crew were expecting turbulence and wind shear during the descent, they assumed this was the reason for the buffeting. In reality, they had stalled.

Fortunately, the pilots had enough height to recover controlled flight, but only knew about the stall when later informed by the team investigating the incident. (Web search: *The role of cognitive bias in aircraft accidents*, Captain Shem Malmquist, April 2014.)

### It happens to us, too

A candid video by the Flying Reporter, John Hunt, demonstrates expectation bias in GA flying, this time to do with navigation, and mercifully without major consequence.

On a flight in poor weather from Sleaf to Barton, he was being taxed not only by the conditions but by the complexities of the Manchester Low Level Route and urbanisation around his destination.

A windsock and runway visible through the gloom convinced him this was Barton, but it was a false validation of his expectation.

Fortunately, he checked his moving map, whose trace showed him way off track, and he corrected the mistake, resulting in a safe landing in the right place. (Web search: *Pilot error – confirmation bias example*, March 2023.)

Another GA example comes from

William E Dubois, who like many of us usually avoided controlled airspace.

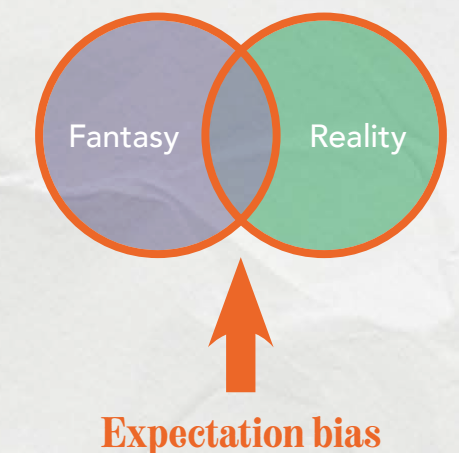
On the occasion described, though, he was required to land at an airport with an ATC service, and in his anxiety to conform to instructions from the tower, he fixated on the idea that the runway circuit was right-hand.

The controller told him left-hand, which he read back correctly – then promptly executed a right-hand circuit.

Stern words from the tower corrected his error without consequence, but the combination of false mental set and situational anxiety could have led to deadly traffic conflict at low altitude. (Web search: William E Dubois, *Training and safety tip – avoid expectation bias*, July 2022.)

### It could be you

Have we all been victims of expectation bias? I certainly have: I once thought I was attempting to land on 02 at Rossall, while actually approaching the adjacent airfield at Moss Edge. ▷



A Venn diagram of expectation bias. Fantasy and reality should ideally be kept apart. Expectation bias happens when the two overlap to a greater or lesser degree, It can distort judgements, cause errors and adversely affect decision-making



▷ My expectation was for a grass runway pointing north-north-east, with sheds and farm buildings nearby, and in those respects, Rossall and Moss Edge are similar. Fortunately, an unexpected flexwing was lining up for takeoff at Moss Edge, and a quick radio call resolved the situation.

On another occasion, before a trip to a new-to-me farm strip, I phoned the owner for PPR, obtained the approach and landing details and studied the OS map.

Before that, I'd overflown the field to locate it and build up a mental picture of its surroundings in a remote and heavily forested valley. I knew the runway was 270m long with 40ft trees at one end, and landing and takeoff had to be in opposite directions.

I chose a calm, if hot, day in summer, and all looked enticing from the overhead. The strip was well-defined and the approach clear, so my expectation was for a normal short-strip landing. What I hadn't bargained for were surface undulations, invisible from above, that were just the right wavelength to relaunch the Skyranger on touchdown.

After two balloons, and knowing a third could wreck the unsprung undercarriage, I aborted with enough runway available to outclimb the approaching trees, and went around with a plan to touch down next time with the wings just above stall speed. However, in ground effect and a temperature of 29°C, the little plane just kept flying until it finally settled after only one bounce.

Disaster was averted, just. But maybe I should have acknowledged my overweening expectation (not in small part occasioned by the idyllic setting), overcome the getinitis syndrome and gone home.

Perhaps the moral of this tale is to ask for more detailed information about unfamiliar landing areas than basic things like whether the ground is firm and free of livestock. A surface that might not trouble a shock-absorbing undercarriage could be unsuitable for a rigid one, so enquire. Bumps and roughness are bad enough, but regular undulations are worse.

### But it was fine the last time

Expectation bias can take many forms, perhaps the most obvious being to consider an aircraft airworthy because it was the last time it flew.

To omit a thorough pre-flight inspection is to court potential disaster, when that fuel line, control cable or spring that were fine during the previous flight might have split, frayed or snapped in the interim.

Tyres are another issue. Blithely accepting that they look as firm as they did for the last landing is a form of expectation bias, but our small-wheeled aircraft tyres tend to lose pressure steadily, and underinflated tyres can appear servicea-



Weather forecasts can strongly bias expectation, in this case towards an idyllic day on Gigha. The reality of building cumulus and violent thermal convection undermined the expectation, though, causing discomfort on the way home rather than a major change of plan

ble superficially, but can roll off the rim, (especially true of the nosewheel), if subjected to sideways forces during taxiing.

The remedy, obviously, is to check tyre pressures regularly with a gauge, however awkward to access the valves might be.

A very high-risk outlook is expecting an engine to be ready for ignition without a full pre-start checklist. Injuries have arisen, and aircraft and property damaged, because of pilots failing to notice a fully open throttle before starting. All might appear well in the cockpit, but a hidden throttle lever can easily go unnoticed in the rush to get airborne.

### It takes two

Having two pilots onboard can engender expectation bias. Once, as a passenger being flown by a high-hours pilot to an airfield known by him but new to me, I assumed he knew the way, and relaxed to admire the view.

It was only when land turned to sea and I checked SkyDemon that I realised he was lost and making for the wrong airfield, albeit one near the intended destination, but at the time being used for ballistics testing.

It can also work the other way, for in-



Fantasy and expectation bias error: fantasising can create expectation bias and lead to navigation errors



Expectation bias can conflict with the reality of fickle weather. Here, the outbound flight from Rossall to Kirkbride was uneventful. During lunch, sea fog started rolling in that enveloped the Lakeland Fells and necessitated a return to Kirkbride for an overnight stay in a hotel.

stance when the pilot might become less circumspect because his or her passenger is a more experienced flyer.

An expectation that the passenger might help if trouble occurs is a dangerous one, given that the passenger's mind could be elsewhere, suffused by the enjoyment and lesser responsibility of being flown. There are no P2s in micro-light flying.

### Getting the wind up

Expectation bias affects decision-making, especially in high-stress situations, and familiarity not so much breeds contempt in flying as complacency, especially when it comes to expectations of wind direction.

Sea breezes are an insidious example of a change that can suddenly result in a 180° reversal of wind direction over runways near the coast.

Complacency and false prediction might mean you land westward into wind, have a break, hop in and take off westward again, ignoring the windsock now favouring an eastward departure and giving you a tailwind and an uncomfortably long ground roll.

### Guilty as charged, Your Honour

Just the other day, I made a downwind landing on a farm strip without a windsock. The cognitive factor was undoubtedly expectation bias causing inattention to ground features, such as smoke that might have shown a coastal swing in the wind, despite the site being well inland.

While on that occasion the wind was light and my landing safe, sea breeze reversals can be catastrophic. Many years ago, I witnessed the tragic loss of two pilots in a glider tug who had been towing all afternoon, but spun while turning towards the runway used repeatedly before, probably because of not realising a sea breeze reversal had occurred late in the day.

### To go or not to go

The combination of well-known but hostile terrain and poor weather can create a lethal expectation bias when a go/no-go decision is required.

Weather conditions on the day, not as they were on a previous occasion or hoped for in advance, are paramount.

Some years ago, when I was on the ground not far away, a pilot crashed crossing an Alpine saddle. The reasoning of the victim can never be fathomed, but expectation bias might have been a factor, this time in the power of his aircraft to ascend the ridge, despite a forecast headwind that should have signalled leeward rotor on the climb.

Speculatively, another cognitive bias which might have played a part in this event is that of continuation bias.

Colloquially known as pressonitis, this is when a pilot decides to carry on with a plan that clearly needs to be reviewed in the light of changing circumstances and current information.

Social pressure from other pilots, say, when making a rendezvous, can cause unwise continuation bias and needs to be faced even if it means letting them down.

### Be your own flexible friend

In summary, expectation bias is a form of mental rigidity with at its core an impairment of situational awareness whereby information about decision-making is ignored or falsely embellished by preconception and familiarity.

As pilots, we should take heed of this weakness. So what might we do to mitigate errors of airmanship due to expectation bias? My suggestions are these:

- 1 Accept that it can happen to us all.
- 2 Reflect on occasions where it happened: for instance, latching on to a navigational feature that seemed right but wasn't; ignoring a changing engine note because it wasn't there the last time we flew; landing one way in a crosswind in the lee of buildings through habit instead of the other way in clean air; anticipating then incorrectly setting a squawk or radio frequency from an ATCO which wasn't the one transmitted; assuming a trim lever is set properly when it isn't... the list goes on.
- 3 Get used to automatically asking ourselves whether information being processed at any one time is, in part or whole, fantasy based on expectation rather than reality, and adjusting our perspectives accordingly. □



# Michael O'Leary on the starboard bow, cap'n!



Dave, Kaz and Nynja

The last thing **Danny Roach** expected on a grand day out was a close encounter of the Ryanair kind

"YES, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes!" – that was my characteristic, enthusiastic and default response when Attitude Airports CFI James Walker casually asked: "Fancy a fly-out tomorrow, mate?"

I love my job instructing at Attitude Airports, but it is nice to fly somewhere different occasionally instead of constantly going round and round in circles.

The plan for the impromptu trip to

“””

Something big caught my eye at our two o'clock

Welshpool was that my wife Kaz would fly the Nynja, and Dave Longbottom would pilot the EuroFox with James.

Shortly before takeoff, we decided that Kaz and I would lead, but I knew that wouldn't last. Kaz likes to fly a fair bit slower than James, and sure enough, before we'd even crossed the M6 he was alongside us before gradually pulling away as we progressed south. ▶



Contact two o'clock high!



It was a glorious day



En route in the EuroFox (photo: James Walker)



"Golf Zulu Lima, taking off Runway 22." (photo: Brian Hull)



Danny and Kaz en route

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Dave, James and Kaz enjoying a brew on the terrace at Welshpool

▷ With a shrug, I gave up on winning that particular race, and switched my focus back to being lookout.

As our route was going to take us through the Manchester Low Level Route, I'd already thought about a few things I always do to try and minimise risk in what can be a crowded bit of airspace.

There are several factors to consider both before and during the flight, and with that in mind, it's great to see that the CAA is doing a consultation on the future of this piece of airspace with the aim of making it simpler and safer.

It was a fairly thermic day, and as we descended toward the MLLR, things started to get a little livelier. With Kaz flying, I was handling lookout and radios to help share the workload. Overflying Kenyon Hall Farm, the home of Lancashire Aero Club, we caught sight of some of the model planes being flown there.

Then, at around 1000ft something big caught my eye at our two o'clock.

After the initial burst of adrenaline that you get in the MLLR when spotting anything in the vicinity, further inspection revealed that it was a Ryanair Boeing 737 flying what felt like just off our right wing.

In reality, of course, it was about 1500ft above us and at least half a mile away. The photo I took doesn't really do it justice.

Climbing out of the MLLR to the relative safety of higher altitudes, we were treated to great views of Oulton Park, where the British Superbikes were racing, and also Beeston Castle.

The rest of the flight was fairly uneventful, apart from the pure bliss of Kaz and I being able to spend time sharing our mutual hobby.

Welshpool's circuit is at 1500ft, and as this is an unfamiliar circuit height for us, it's easy to end up too high on final, which we duly did, but Kaz does love to sideslip, and after our, er, "sporty" approach, James was ready with a gentle ribbing about our tardiness, but also an excellent spot on the café balcony. The four of us enjoyed a lovely hour or so in the sunshine, with a fabulous lunch.

While working on our tans, we got chatting with Brian Hull, who was on the balcony and took some excellent photo-

graphs of the Attitude Airports fleet, for which many thanks.

**Welshpool** really is a treat to visit, and one of the many reasons a trip down the MLLR is well worth it if you are based north of Manchester. Why not give it a visit? □

*You can read more of Danny's work at [danroachauthor.co.uk/blog](https://danroachauthor.co.uk/blog) or follow his Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/danroachauthor](https://www.facebook.com/danroachauthor) for regular updates. His book, Inside the Cyclone, is available on Kindle and in paperback at [Amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk).*

## New or re-registered microlights

G-reg	Aircraft type	Owner	Town
CDCF	Pegasus Quik	Steven Edwin Lyden	King's Lynn
CMTD	EuroFox 3K	Richard George Hearsey	Rye
CMUP	EuroFox 2K	Roger Martin Cornwell	Cirencester
CMUS	Chronos 16/Cosmos	Ian Arthur Macadam	Winchester
CMUW	Flylight Adam	Christopher Nigel Clegg	Weston-Super-Mare
CMWC	Pipistrel Alpha	Fly About Aviation Ltd	Beccles
CMWT	Pipistrel Alpha	Michael Edward Hughes	Sleaford
CSAC	EuroFox 3K	Charles Simon Arthur Costa	Cheltenham
DOSS	Exodus DeltaJet 500 Stingray	Brian Dossett	Potters Bar
GCMS	Exodus DeltaJet 500 Stingray	Christopher Mark Saysell	St Albans
MBTH	MW4	Toby Alexander Willcox	Dursley
MTFG	Chevron 2-32C (modified)	John Charles Gates	Clacton-On-Sea
MTGF	Thruster TST Mk1 (modified)	Neil Hay	Lincoln
MVHG	Gemini Flash IIA (modified)	Calum Clarkson	Linlithgow
MWLD	Shadow Series CD (modified SSDR)	Andrew Richard Hawes	Ipswich
OKDM	TL-3000 Sirius 600	David Sidney Murrell	Norwich
SGCB	EuroFox 2K	Southdown Gliding Club Ltd	Pulborough
XCLJ	Flylight FoxCub	David John Thorpe Reckitt	Kingsbridge



## Addendum

# It's not easy being Madam Zoroastra

With aviation changing faster than life at Downing Street, predicting the future isn't easy, says **Rob Hughes**



AN important part of any CEO's job is forward planning, then preparing minds and resources for what might come. This is just a bit difficult right now...

Firstly, the CAA is reviewing the national pilot licence system. I have written previously that this could have a profound impact on microlighting and the BMAA. There is a real opportunity to create one single national licence, and then a crediting system on to an ICAO-compliant PPL. This would dramatically change the way in which students learn to fly in the UK, and microlights – with their eco-friendlier performance and use of unleaded fuels – would become the aeroplane of choice.

Secondly, some of the key organisations that make up the aviation family in the UK are undergoing change:

The GA Unit <https://www.caa.co.uk/general-aviation/the-ga-unit/> – or "our" part of the CAA – welcomes a new head in Hannah Foksett, although she is soon to start maternity leave, and James Shipp will stand in.

The GA Alliance <https://gaalliance.org.uk/> has a new "facilitator" in Mike Pearson (who is also the Popham Airfield Manager). I consider the GAA to be the most important cross-industry voice for general aviation, and Mike has an active agenda to resolve current issues, but also to proactively avoid future ones.

The GAAC <https://gaac.org.uk/> elected a new chairman following a retirement. Matt Wilkins is well known as Old Buckenham Aerodrome Manager, and he too has hit the ground running with a progressive mindset.

The RAeC <https://royalaeroclub.uk/> will have staged its AGM by the time you read this, and if jungle drums are beating in rhythm, will also have a new chairman, with the current one reaching the end of his term.

Thirdly, the CAA has initiated a project to examine EASA's Part 21 Light initial

airworthiness rules for sport and recreational aircraft. The emphasis may shift from complying with rules to declaring compliance – thereby reducing delays, cost and possibly BMAA Technical Office involvement in future aeroplane approvals.

It's early days, and we don't have any details yet, but it may prove to be another agent of change.

Fourthly, our CTO, Roger Patrick, is semi-retiring and reducing to two days per week, although still a BMAA employee.

This has led to a lot of activity to accommodate the new arrangement, and also has an impact on the future of the technical office. We are advertising for an additional Design Approval Engineer, so the employee count within the tech office will increase.

Fifthly, existing Design Approval Engineer Mark Bailey is reorganising internal tech office procedures to improve efficiencies. I expect to combine this with even more news towards the end of this year as we look to change the way you interact with the BMAA, particularly when sending us information or data.

This is a work in progress, and I hope to report more on this soon.

What doesn't change is the joy of getting some air under your tyres, and it's great to read of your exploits on social media and elsewhere.

I remember the old Heineken advert saying that it "refreshes the parts other beers can't reach".

Well, give me a calm sunny evening and a tank full of fuel instead... □



Don't look at me. I can't see a single thing in here



## COUNCIL AIRWAVES

# Luddite – or hopeless romantic?

Chairman **Tim Burrow** wonders out loud if we're relying too much on technology



Tim Burrow's DeltaJet 500, full-fat and ready for action

IS it a sign of the times with modern airspace – or a sign of modern technology?

I recently collected my flexwing from Rob Grimwood and John Waite at Exodus Aircraft, following work being done for the service bulletin issued in January. It's now a full-fat, dual-seat DeltaJet, not a single-seat diet version.

I left Plaistows on Friday afternoon for Deenethorpe to camp and spend two days flying in preparation for the World Microlight Championships, then landed back home in Preston at 9.15pm on Saturday, having flown 10.5 hours of the previous 32.

I was feeling quite buoyant on Sunday: extremely pleased with the preparation work completed for the WMC and having thoroughly enjoyed several hours of long-overdue flying.

On Monday, however, I received an email which said I'd been cited in an airprox report close to Cranfield, and I was being asked to furnish the Airprox Board with any information I had regarding the incident and file an online report. (And no, I didn't bust the

Cranfield ATZ).

At this time, I don't have clear information regarding the nature of the incident. I was completely unaware of any other aircraft in such close proximity as to cause alarm.

I had, of course, seen a few small GA aircraft during the one-hour flight, a couple of helicopters and even a helium-foil party balloon, but nothing worryingly close.

I have a transponder in my aircraft, and was squawking 7000, which I presume is where the data had been extracted from to obtain my registration.

I'd had it factory-fitted because I felt it was the right thing to add to any new aircraft being built.

However, as a diehard flexwing pilot of over 20 years, the joy of flying for me is still about the freedom it affords and the ability to simply explore within Class G airspace.

I know we are told the demand for airspace is getting higher and the need for technology to keep us all apart is getting greater.



The joy of flying is about the freedom it affords

But I have to admit that I'm trying to hold that progress off for as long as I can, firm in the belief that those of us at the very lightest end of aviation, who generally hug the floor a bit closer and follow interesting ground features, as opposed to straight magenta lines between points A & B, enjoy a safe and enjoyable form of flying which can integrate with other aviators.

I do run SkyDemon at all times, as it complements paper-chart navigation beautifully, but I'm not ready to throw away the paper chart just yet.

Is it a sign of the times? Am I hopelessly clinging on to a world which is rapidly disappearing? Is that an acceptable position to take, or is the only way to fly today, regardless of aircraft type, to be equipped with an array of devices relaying as many other nearby aircraft as possible to a little glass screen?

Or is the modern technology we are all becoming increasingly reliant upon creating a world which feeds the need for more?

I have said many times that the BMAA is a very broad church, with sub-70 single-seat fun machines right through to stunning 600kg hotships. Should we be able to fly with a similar diversity of approaches, or is that just a naive viewpoint?

Anyway, whatever you fly, and however you keep yourself clear of everyone else, stay safe and enjoy this fantastic sport. □

## FLIGHT PLANS



**CLUBS!** Planning an event? Mail details to [ghillster@gmail.com](mailto:ghillster@gmail.com) for inclusion in *Flight Plans*.

**READERS!** This list is subject to change after we go to press. Check with organisers before going anywhere!

**27 Jul – 3 Aug:** DEENETHORPE AIRFIELD. **18th FAI World Microlight Championships.** The biggest global microlight event, returning to the UK for the first time since Popham in 2016. See <https://www.wmc2024.com/>.

**10 Aug:** HEADON AIRFIELD. **Summer Fly-in Open Day.** Hangar bash, live music, licenced bar, camping, microlight simulator, trial flights (subject to weather). Details on <https://www.microlight.co.uk>.

**10-11 Aug:** RUFFORTH (EAST). **The Flexwing Weekend (postponed from 13-14 July).** Speaker and supplier programme on Saturday. Camping, café, bar. Details from Andy Oliver: [andy@thejourneymanballadeer.com](mailto:andy@thejourneymanballadeer.com).

**30 Aug – 1 Sep:** LEICESTER AERODROME. **LAA Rally.** More information on [lightaircraftassociation.co.uk](http://lightaircraftassociation.co.uk).

**7 Sep:** WESTONZOYLAND AIRFIELD. **Westonzoyland Flying Club annual fly-in.** Good food, drink, company and music. Please PPR by calling Spencer Stinchcombe on 07974 674188.

**7-8 Sep:** NORTH COATES. **Summer Fly-in.** Contact Steve Gennery on [stevengennery7@gmail.com](mailto:stevengennery7@gmail.com) for details.

**14 Sep:** SUTTON MEADOWS. **Sutton Meadows Fly-in BBQ.** Fly-in and barbecue at Sutton Meadows in aid of East Anglia Air Ambulance. Starts 11am. No landing fees but donations welcome. More information on [bmaa.org](http://bmaa.org) or [www.cambsmicrolightclub.co.uk](http://www.cambsmicrolightclub.co.uk).

### Overseas events

**13-15 Sep:** FRANCE. **Mondial de l'ULM.** France's biggest microlight show,, located at Le Breuil Airport, Villefrancœur. Information from <https://mondialulm.fr/>.

**17-22 Sep:** FRANCE. **Coupe Icare (Icarus Cup).** Annual free-flight festival at Saint-Hilaire du Touve. Competitions, airshow, flying costume show. Includes microlights and paramotors. Details on [https://www.coupe-icare.org/GB\\_home.html](https://www.coupe-icare.org/GB_home.html).



Dennis Hopper, Andrew's pet frog, hard at work producing MF. You wouldn't get this from other flying magazines, you know



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get any, he'd be out of a job! But before writing  
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membership details, see below.

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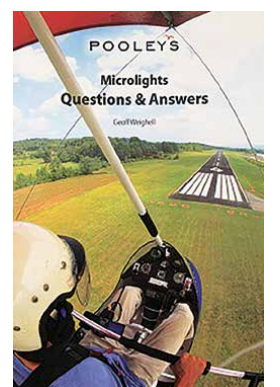
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