inside

ENGINE TEST
D-Motor LF26 with Sherwood Ranger

To fly is to live
A Winter's Tale
AVGAS

A taxiing business

IT’S not the flying, it’s the taxiing that gets you.

I arrived at the airfield to find CFI Ken Crompton with a distinguished looking chap who turned out to be called Joe McCarron.

“Morning, Lofty!” said Ken cheerily. “Joe and his fellow student James have just bought a nice Thruster from an airfield near Derby, and I’ve volunteered you to fly it home for them.”

A week later, Joe and I found ourselves at Watnall farm strip, shaking hands with Ian and Gary, the former owners of G-RAFH, and climbing in as the innovative windsock, a pair of high-vis trousers, did its best to detach itself from the pole.

After a bumpy climbout, we turned west for Rossall Field north of Blackpool and asked Manchester for a transit, only to be told to bugger off because we didn’t have a transponder, leaving us heading for the Pennines with a disturbingly solid looking wall of cloud ahead.

Just as I was about to turn back, it began to look less solid, and we managed to thread our way through, then over the other side breathed a sigh of relief and began to look for Rossall – in vain, since it’s a grass strip in the middle of lots more grass.

All hail, then, the pilot of the C42 we spotted calling downwind right so we could follow him in.

Rossall pilot Danny Roach, who’s written some great stuff for MPP, couldn’t be there because of the flimsy excuse that he was getting married, but CFI James Walker was a complete star, taking us to a local farm brewery for a pint, finding us a nice hotel with good nosh, and giving us a lift there and back.

Next morning, we found our student Roger Birkett kindly cleaning our screen – which I promptly covered in mud after losing the runway while backtracking and bogging the Thruster down.

Hauled out by James, we sailed north over the Lake District to friendly Carlisle Airport in glorious conditions, had lunch with Newtownards pilot Mark Smith and his mate Gary Loughran, who’d pottered over in a Jabiru, and made it home in time for tea and medals.

Now if you’ll excuse me, I’ve some mud to clean off. Geoff Hill ghiller@icloud.com
PHOTO
COMPETITION

THIS MONTH’S WINNERS

First  Andy Mackinnon, “Glencoe” (main photo, above right)
Second  Alex Smith, “Over the Grampians” (page 3)
Third  =  Paul Kiddell, “Firth of Forth” (immediate right)
Third  =  Tracy Cummings, “Why we fly” (front cover)
Fifth   Kai Foyen, “Harthope Valley” (immediately above)
Also commended:
Aaron Mercer, “Fly low and stay warm” (above, top)
Amanda Williams, “Peak time” (back cover)
John Orbell, “Loch Linhe” (far right)

GALE-force winds and sub-zero temperatures? Pah! You lot laugh in their face as you wrap up well and take to the skies with gay abandon. This month’s winner Andy Mackinnon typifies your spirit: “Jim Crosby and I on a jolly to Oban via Glencoe,” he said. “We went there low level for lunch and back a wee bit higher via Glencoe and a spy at Ben Nevis and some other pointy mountains. Beats work!” said Jim.
Top award for Dave Broom

DAVE BROOM, the reigning World Air Games champion, has added another honour to his list of achievements – the Ann Welch Diploma.

Dave picked up the award by setting a new world distance record for a flight in a single-seat flexwing without using the engine.

The flight, of 34.54km, or 21.46 miles, was made in a Eurofly Snake from Sandy, Bedfordshire, in June 2019.

Dave said: “It’s awesome that CIMA has decided to award the Ann Welch Diploma to me. I only briefly met the great lady once, but I’m hugely honoured to receive the award bearing her name.

“I hope that this soaring distance world record is the first of many on the Snake. I will be doing my best to beat my own record this year, weather allowing.”

I will be doing my best to beat my own record this year, weather allowing.”

Main photo Dave Broom, seen here having fun in the Eurofly Snake, has been awarded the FAI’s prestigious Ann Welch Diploma

Above Ann Welch, a stalwart supporter and mentor of gliding, paragliding and microlighting, and was the BMAA’s first President.

She was for many years FAI Vice President, and was instrumental in creating CIMA.

Mike joins MF team

THE bubbling crucible of innovation that is MF Global HQ now has an extra hand to stir the pot. Mike Morris, who joins us as advertising manager, Mike, whose pitch for the post revealed a unique blend of amiable character and business acumen, has been a BMAA member for 35 years, a BMAA inspector for 30 of those, and an LAA inspector for the past six years. “I’m also a former instructor and check pilot, and a huge supporter and advocate for the BMAA and microlighting in general,” he said.

Many owners in the north will recognize him by the red boiler suit he always wears when inspecting aircraft. With over 4000h in his logbook, he loves and regularly flies both fixed and flexwings. His current personal mount is a unique highly modified Pegasus Q, and he also owns a 303 Quantum and a share in a Eurostar.

He left his day job in December as a senior commercial publishing manager working for a group that produces award-winning magazines to focus on his passion for microlights.

“In today’s world of digital media, with phones and tablets being a primary source of news and information, there is an assumption that print media in general is in decline,” he said.

“This is partly true in regard to print newspapers. However, the print magazine industry is still a growing and popular medium.

“Print advertising of any kind is highly effective in terms of brand awareness and general profile in the marketplace, and when combined with digital profile can deliver great outcomes for clients. So watch this space for some interesting new ideas to make MF the place to be seen.

“A flying school owner I met recently used the words ‘preaching to the converted’ as the excuse not to advertise in MF, which is bizarre.

“We need to politely educate potential advertisers in regard to the true reach of a print magazine, which is many times more than a print run, and to better understand how a regular profile will deliver a return on their investment.”

Ryanair boss in penny dreadful shocker

HAVING recently been inspired by Ryanair on a recent trip to Tenerife, Wiltshire Microlight Centre boss Tony Hughes has introduced a new scheme to help new-comers at his Yatesbury base: trial flights for 1p.

“Ryanair boss Michael O’Leary was one of the first to come along and take advantage of this new deal,” said Tony. “We have worked very hard to streamline the system to make the flying experience as cheap as possible. All you do is pay a penny and add on the extras – simple!”

“Mr O’Leary was encouraged by the advertising to book online (at an extra cost of £24), but having been unable to work out how to opt out of the insurance option, he had to pay an extra £30 for his 30-minute flight, plus an extra £13 for another on-time takeoff.”

“He prebooked his rear seat for an extra £80, as the front seat option (extra £80) was not available. Unfortunately, he was 3kg over the 60kg seat weight limit and had to pay an extra £10 per kilo.

“Smokeless cigarettes were provided (extra £5) to calm his nerves after being told he had to pay £90 for priority boarding."
To Skeggy for fish and chips

Steve Beeson pays tribute to his best friend, Geoff Jones

Geoff, a member of both Stoke Flyers and the Cheshire Microlight Centre, was taken to Royal Stoke Hospital and placed in an induced coma, before being relieved of the loose change in his pocket to tell us exactly what he thought of our low-cost no-frills air experience. Geoff got his pilot’s licence in 1987 on flexwings, and owned 10 aircraft over the years, the last one a Eurostar. As his best mate, I gained my licence at the same time. Keith Vinting was our instructor.

I remember flying to the Isle of Man with Geoff and one or two others to watch the TT. We landed at Andreas airfield, had fish and chips and homemade muffin (£6) plus an extra £40 as the camera didn’t fit into a matchbox.

Unfortuately, as Mr O’Leary did not confirm that he wanted to take a camera to record his flight, he had to pay £80 extra on arrival and a £40 supplement for video, plus an extra £40 as the camera didn’t fit into a matchbox.

“On arrival at the centre, a preflight cup of tea (£3) and homemade muffin (£6) were eagerly consumed using our own Wilsiehurst Microlight Centre cup hire at £2 and plate for £1. Followed by a pre-flight visit to the toilet (£1.20).

“Access to the briefing notes (£1.20) and entry to the executive seating area for a very reasonable £1.50, as well as use of the viewing deck for his wife for £1.20 and £3.50 for each of their four children, was handed over.

“We have a wide selection of flying suits for hire (£1.50), belts (£1.50), headsets (£1.50) and gloves (£1.20), as well as compulsory sunglasses (£1.50) and earplugs (£1.25).

“Pilot chat is a small extra at £6.00, and announcements (£2.00) each, not forgetting gate fee (£1.50) and parking for up to two hours for £40.

“Mr O’Leary wisely opted not to leave his car outside the gate (£5.00), or clamp removal (£80); the sick bag option was selected (£2.00), and flying gear cleaning service was applied at £1.30 or no cleaning fee for £1.40.

“A stunned Mr O’Leary came down after another on-time arrival (extra £1.50) and landing fee (£1.50) and took advantage of the compulsory scratch card (£2.00), post-flight photograph by the aircraft (£2.00) with email option (£1.50), sick bag disposal (£2.00), or if used £60 and exclusive access to our comments book (£1.20) to tell us exactly what he thought of our low-cost no-frills air experience, before being relieved of the loose change in his pocket to help instructors in need.

“He summed the whole thing up in one word: ‘****y speech­leaf’ (plus £1.20 for the extra word).”

Atmosphere electric at Aero

AERO Friedrichshafen is to host a competition for electric and hybrid microbangers on 30-31 March.

In the Lindbergh e­Flight Rally will fly around Lake Constance and arrive at the show on its opening day, 1 April.

For further information, see aero­expo.com. The closing date for entries is 31 January.

Rotax roundup

GOT a Rotax? Thought you might.

Well, after the success of last September’s inaugural Rotax fly­in to Wels airfield in Austria, the company’s planning another one on 21-23 August 2020.

The programme will include test and demonstration flights with the 912iS and 915iS engines, a company tour of BRP­Rotax’s state­of­the­art­ facility in Gunskirchen and a visit to a new exhibition celebrating 100 years of the company in 2020.

For more information, contact BMAA bursary have written in MF of their desire for a career in aviation, and these folk in particular will enjoy the book, which takes the reader from a childhood in a very air-minded family through flight engineering­ training, and then piloting business jets, light aircraft, jumbos, you name it, for decades...

It is obvious on every page that Steve Ford absolutely loved his job, and as befits a person who has taken a pride in his professionalism, there are no tales of derring­do. However, there are descriptions of a few situations scary enough to make you glad you weren’t in the plane.

He also describes many of the people he worked with, but the characterisation is rather bland, and I concluded that he was trying very hard not to upset anyone. Either that, or he really is the kind of person who gets on with everybody.

I’ve always felt that careers­advisors spend too much time discussing the merits or otherwise of various ways to gainfully­ fill 40 hours per week, and too little of the effect of those activities on the other (24­x7)­40 hours.

In that respect, this book misses an opportunity, for I found myself wanting more insight into the effect on personal and family life of such an itinerant existence.

Despite these criticisms, this is a worthwhile read which many members will enjoy, particularly young people contemplating a flying career.

Norman Burr

Blink, and you’d miss it, but…

20 West, by Steve Ford
Published by 20WestEbook.com.
£8.99 paperback, £2.99 Kindle

THIS book mentions the word microlight just once, and that only in passing. But BMAA members are a catholic lot, and if you want to learn what it’s like to spend a lifetime working at the other end of the flying spectrum as a flight engineer and commercial pilot, this book will not disappoint.

On several occasions, recipients of a BMAA bursary have written in MF of their desire for a career in aviation, and these folk in particular will enjoy the book, which takes the reader from a childhood in a very air-minded family through flight engineering-training, and then piloting business jets, light aircraft, jumbos, you name it, for decades...

It is obvious on every page that Steve Ford absolutely loved his job, and as befits a person who has taken a pride in his professionalism, there are no tales of derring­do. However, there are descriptions of a few situations scary enough to make you glad you weren’t in the plane.

He also describes many of the people he worked with, but the characterisation is rather bland, and I concluded that he was trying very hard not to upset anyone. Either that, or he really is the kind of person who gets on with everybody.

I’ve always felt that careers­advisors spend too much time discussing the merits or otherwise of various ways to gainfully­ fill 40 hours per week, and too little of the effect of those activities on the other (24­x7)­40 hours.

In that respect, this book misses an opportunity, for I found myself wanting more insight into the effect on personal and family life of such an itinerant existence.

Despite these criticisms, this is a worthwhile read which many members will enjoy, particularly young people contemplating a flying career.

Norman Burr
ELDERLY TWO-STROKES

Worthy but worthless

DEAR EDITOR

The last issue had a very interesting interview with Joan Walsh, and Augas is always a delight to read, but left me with some thoughts regarding the future of microlights.

Regarding upsizing the weight to 600kg, which will obviously lead to more sophisticated aircraft with all manner of gimmicks, I am not fully persuaded that this is the way to the future, particularly as I am at present having some difficulty with a brand new Mercedes motorhome in which the computers aren’t talking to each other, leading to it being christened the Haunted Snail.

One downside now is the devaluation of the early aircraft such as the Thruster, AX3 and others, powered by two-strokes which are reliable if looked after and cared for. As a result, a modern high-performance bicycle is worth more than an AX3 on the open market.

An AX3 may not be fast, but then you stop getting lost so much quicker than a faster aircraft. As long as you know how high, how fast and what direction you are heading, that’s enough for most pilots with a good map.

I don’t want a cockpit that looks like it came out of a 737, but no doubt at some time in the near future we’ll have a traffic collar, avoiding system fitted, and blind flying panels for frustrated jet jockeys.

I work on the Boeing principal of a dark cockpit, ie no warning lights showing means it’s all working as it should, and sometimes less information means less stress and worry to deal with.

It is unfortunate that those who learnt to fly on the likes of a CA2 often look with disdain on the early aircraft, thinking they aren’t much fun, but there’s so much pleasure to be had by just bimbling around the area at a steady 50mph, looking down and thinking that for thousands of years people wanted to fly, and now we are lucky enough to be able to do it.

Having said that, so much pleasure is also lost, at least in Hampshire, due to airways, restricted zones, airports, concerns at bustling zones and areas where you don’t fly in case you end up being shot at by a disgruntled farmer (maps for Lasham glider pilots are marked where not to land out).

But is it worth it? Yes, so let’s keep flying simple, as it is in SSDR aircraft. You can usually tell if the aircraft is climbing or descending quicker than the VSI can anyway, so look out the window rather than at a screen.

Above Tim Gardner landing at the Brimpton fly-in in his much loved TST

Crunch time

DEAR EDITOR

I attended my first GASCo safety event at the Boscombe Down Aviation Collection, hosted by Hugh Sillett of the collection and delivered by Mike Benson, GASCo’s Regional Safety Officer for the west of England.

If your readers haven’t been to one of these events before, I’d recommend you give it a go. There were great insights due to Mike’s presentation style, which struck the right balance of serious messaging delivered with humour.

There was quite a cross-section of attendees – different types of licence holders (ATPL, CPL, PPL), some with thousands of flying hours, some just setting off on the aviation journey and even a SATCo to complete the lineup.

Unlimited custard creams. Bourbons and chocolate digestives were on offer, but the Hobnobs were noticeable by their absence. However, that was more than compensated for by a useful takeaway pack of goodies, and it’s also a great opportunity to chew the fat with like-minded aviation bods.

David Kavanagh

Jones passes the test

DEAR EDITOR

My, what a spiffing last issue, from stunning cover to stunning cover. I found the contents so interesting that I completely forgot to eat my breakfast or feed the birds. They seemed off their ap­petites. It wasn’t until I moved one dustbin and found a raptor lurking behind the other that I understood.

Adrian Jones’s flight test was in a league of its own! There was a time when Francis Donaldson’s set the benchmark, but he appears not to be coaxed from his workshop any more.

His gift was to be able to combine great funds of flying and engineering skills all with a way with words that ended up, word for word, with precisely what the reader wanted to know. Good enough to persuade them that if they were given the machine, they’d be 100% certain it fly its solo straight away.

Quite a gift, and Adrian Jones exhibits the same ability. More please? Who took the remarkable photos?

Anthony Preston

Anthony, you are not done in your admiration of Adrian’s flight tests. I’m very lucky to have him, David Brenner, Paul Bennett and our flexwing guru Steve Uzychlubas as our testing panel, and as you’ll see in this issue, David’s been having fun in the lovely Sherlock Rang­er, an aircraft I’ve long loved and now with the D-Meteor as its standard powerplant.

I always loved Francis’ tests, and although he hasn’t done one in the LAA magazine for a while, Chris Donaldson’s are just as fascinating and readable.

I passed on your praise to Adrian, and he said: “That’s very gratifying, Geoff and Antho­ny. It makes it all worthwhile. It’s difficult to know how much technical detail to put in but I hope that it encourages the reader to learn more about stability and control, and other things.”

“The photos of the production aircraft, G-DEGC, were supplied by the designer, Giulio Castelli, and the ones of the prototype, G-EPUN, were mine, taken on the day. So I can’t take any credit for the spectacular front cover image.”

Better apart

DEAR EDITOR

After reading the letters from Deepak Mahajan and John Murphy last month regarding the possible BMAA–LAA merger, my feelings are of great uncertainty of this taking place.

I have been a member of both, and have many years of experience of flying various aircraft. I feel both have their place as flying associations, but should never be brought together, as with most situations like this, one will draw the short straw and surely miss out.

Yours sincerely.

Roland Sinclair-Brown
Dear Editor

Paddy Wright has, as a BIMAA member for 20 years, and today clocked up his 1000th flying hour on his 80th birthday.

His real name is Terence Wright, originally from Cavan, hence “Paddy”, although that’s not my belief, apparently his mother told him that whatever his name was, he’d always be called Paddy.

Starting in 1998 at the microlight school at Lichfield, with Mick Shea on Pegasus XL, he later flew a Flash 2a and Quantum 582. He called me in 2005 and said: “Mick, the old age I’ve been saving for has arrived, and I want to buy a new Quantum 912”, which he did, then owned it for eight years.

He now flies a Quik 912 which has revolutionised his flying, and he’s up for every camping trip going from our base at Cottage Farm, Lecestershire.

Kind regards, Mick Moutlon

No time for a bite

Dear Editor

Aircraft photographer and instructor Sean McRandle captured a great shot of a flight of three Pumas midway through a training exercise as they lingered over the runway at Yatebury, home of the Wiltshire Microlight Centre.

I did give PPR, and their timing was almost to the second. And I did have the Hobnobs ready, but they didn’t hang around long enough.

Regards, Tony Hughes

Advice on Africa

Dear Editor

I am planning a trip to Morocco in January. I just wondered if any readers have done this and can throw me some pearls of wisdom? The previous recommendations in MF of the airfield near Barcelona was fantastic. Thank you.

Charlie Ellingworth

Jon Hilton replies: I flew the Italian Corte, Alexandria route to North Africa and then on to Jordan.

I did try to fly into Morocco four or five years ago heading to the Western Sahara, which is disputed territory, and the authorities were problematic. Essentially it seems to be on a war footing with their neighbours, and “ licked” aircraft get frowned upon.

You might want to try a chap called Eddie at GASE Aviation (07781326035). If you plan to stay alongside the Med you may be OK. Eddie will know.

I don’t recommend North Africa. Too hot. Damn big desert. No Rotax engineers. Infl ated prices. Constantly being asked to fly above your jabs are up to date), running low on fuel and even that is in short supply. Mandatory to findings: flight plan for every fl ight, avgas only if required. It’s important to note that in late September, EASA changed the application form and procedure for permission to fl y a microlight in Spain.

Merv Middleton: I haven’t been there yet. I did lots of research and was told off by my findings. Flight plan for every flight, args only and even that is in short supply. Mandatory to take a flight info service with routing miles off track to compulsory reporting points, adverse comments of lengthy delays and official cor ruption etc. However, this was several years ago, so it might have changed.

I met French pilot Jerome Prompy at Aero Expo Friedrichshafen, who is well travelled across North Africa and has also done Fl Y-UK.

He was very knowledgeable and keen to assist. I believe he is involved in the French ULM organisation and has organised several of its rallies to Africa.

I’m pretty sure if you asked him for his help he would be a font of knowledge. He’s at Jerome.prompy@free.fr.

Space and pace for a brace

Dear Editor

I’ve not flown a Tanarg for a while, but had the pleasure of flying one today. I think sometimes we forget how spoilt we are with modern aircraft. What a super flying machine. I had over 1400/hr/min on climbout, just a tad more than my Drag on, and 70mph was very easy to achieve hands off at 3000rpm, so lots more speed if needed.

The comfort was just amazing, with so much space. I would think it’s the perfect brovac machine.

Clive Mason

Mixture mix-up 1

Dear Editor

I just received the latest issue of my favourite magazine: Fantastic!

The first thing I always do is the quiz, but I find myself at odds with question five.

“When carburettor heat is applied, it also...”

The answer given is 5a, “leans the mixture”, but my thinking is that the warmer air is less dense, therefore there is less air mixing with the same amount of fuel. Therefore it should be 5b, “richens the air mixing with the same amount of fuel.”

If I have got my physics completely messed up, please do put me right.

With many thanks for a really excellent magazine.

Roger Whiteley

Roger, readers Bob Tadman and David Norwood, below, raised the same point. I checked with MF quizmaster Lawrence Bell, and he said: “Yes, they are absolutely correct. I changed the question, but I didn’t change the answer.”

In a moment of wildly impetuous generosity, I sent Lawrence a quid from the MF...
Don’t let the British weather frustrate your training!

FLY365 Ltd now offers Flight Training on Portugal’s Algarve at the ‘Aerodrome De Lagos’

- 10 and 20 hours Flight Training Blocks
- Hour building • Ground school
- Ground Exams & GSTs available Oct. through April

New and Refurbished Aircraft: Quantum 912, and Ikarus C42

Check Out Fly365’s website at www.fly365.co.uk and click on the ‘SUN’ for more information on winter flying in the Algarve

Telephone 01673 885111 • Mobile 07831 439651

Don’t let the British weather frustrate your training!

FLY365 Ltd now offers Flight Training on Portugal’s Algarve at the ‘Aerodrome De Lagos’

- 10 and 20 hours Flight Training Blocks
- Hour building • Ground school
- Ground Exams & GSTs available Oct. through April

New and Refurbished Aircraft: Quantum 912, and Ikarus C42

Check Out Fly365’s website at www.fly365.co.uk and click on the ‘SUN’ for more information on winter flying in the Algarve

Telephone 01673 885111 • Mobile 07831 439651

Gently does it, chaps and chapesses

Lawrence Bell on the delicate art of trimming

A STUDENT pilot has set off on his solo cross-country flight. The Eurostar reaches cruising altitude, and the student lowers the nose before reducing power.

Once the aircraft is stabilised, he slowly pushes the trim lever forward until he feels the pressure disappear from the stick, and the aircraft begins to hold a level flight attitude.

In smooth conditions, it will now be possible for him to fly hands-off unless an altitude or course change is required.

With the workload reduced, he now has enough time to communicate with ATC and navigate the aircraft.

Taking the time to trim the aircraft correctly will greatly reduce the pilot workload and stress. In order to do this, you must first understand the correct process for trimming the aircraft.

Establish attitude and speed first

It’s a common mistake to adjust the trim before the attitude and power have been correctly set. Using the trim in place of the elevator is guesswork, and will result in oscillations.

Faced with such a situation, the workload of a pilot increases instead of decreasing. We keep juggling with the trim, and it soon leads to frustrations as the other tasks in the cockpit call us back.

Firstly, the stick should be used to establish the desired attitude, then power should be adjusted to maintain the desired speed. Once the aircraft has settled, the trim should then be adjusted only to remove the forces on the stick.

Understand how the aircraft will react when it is trimmed

It’s important to understand that an aircraft has the ability to restabilise. This means that you should not respond to every minor change in pitch during turbulence.

Most light aircraft are speed-stable once trimmed, which means that any change in power will result in a change of attitude, while the speed will remain the same. For example, if the power is reduced during the cruise, the aircraft may momentarily decelerate, but then it will pitch down and accelerate back to the original speed, perhaps with a few oscillations first.

This will continue until a pitch adjustment is made by the pilot or the airplane is reconfigured with flaps.

Trimming the aircraft on approach

An aircraft that has been trimmed correctly on final approach will be more speed-stable. This will mean that the pilot spends less effort concentrating on holding speed and can work more on the glideslope and runway alignment.

However, the pilot should be aware of the trim position in the event of a go-around. Sharply increasing power from idle to full may result in an abrupt pitch change, which could result in deceleration. Particular caution should be applied to airmore and pitch attitude in this event.

• Lawrence Bell is the developer of QuizAero, the online ground school for microlight student pilots, quizaero.co.uk

Above Eurostar trim (left) and C42 trim (right). Both photos: John Teesdale
A-Z of D, spelled out for ATC

A controller told a pilot that microlights weren’t allowed into Class D airspace, says John Teesdale. The BMAA put him right

IN the November issue, I talked about the famous quote: “Learn from the mistakes of others; you haven’t enough time to make them all yourself.”

There is much to be gained from reading about the mistakes of others, in that it might prevent you from doing the same, so I invited BMAA members to write in and tell their stories of incidents or accidents so that others could learn from them.

They are starting to trickle in now, and will appear in MF from next month. If you have a story that others might learn from, please don’t be shy, let’s hear it, and don’t forget that it can be published anonymously if you wish.

This principle also lies at the heart of the Confidential Human Factors Incident Reporting Programme (CHIRP), whose members analyse incident reports sent in by pilots and then issue a quarterly General Aviation Feedback reports so others might learn from, please don’t be shy; let’s hear their stories of incidents or accidents so that others could learn from them.

The November edition contains a couple of interesting accounts which I thought worthy of repeating here.

1 Microlight refused entry to Class D airspace when trying to avoid weather

A microlight pilot attempted to transit a Class D CTA in order to avoid bad weather. Despite the pilot explaining his predicament, the controller refused entry, so the pilot was forced to fly a long circuitous route around the CTA. In doing so, he was forced to fly low and very close to heavy showers which, as well as being turbulent, he described as: “At one point, it was like a bucket was being tipped over the canopy, such was the tight squeeze I was having to do between the downpours and the CTA.”

The pilot was understandably aggrieved at the attitude of ATC, so he phoned later and spoke to a senior controller, who told him that, according to their notes, microlights were not allowed to enter Class D airspace.

The BMAA then called the ATC unit. It transpired that the local ATC instructions were an incorrect entry to a long-established non-acceptance of microlights operating at this particular airport.

The airport authority will submit a change to its procedures to delete the reference to microlights not being allowed in Class D airspace, and also from the AIP entry that prevents microlights using the airport.

Safety was clearly being compromised here, so what could have been done differently to avoid the situation?

• The pilot had obtained weather reports which gave a 30% chance of showers. Not unusually, the weather report was wrong.

You must always be prepared for weather to be worse than forecast and have a Plan B, even if that is a simple as turning around and going back.

He did say in his report: “I am all for having a Plan B, and could have turned back, but a little collaboration goes a long way; we are, after all, sharing airspace.”

Collaboration, as push-on-iris, can have a very strong influence when you are in a tight situation. It’s not easy to think clearly and logically when you are under pressure and stressed. It has been the cause of many accidents, some fatal. Never be tempted to push on into worsening weather.

• ATC could have been more helpful. In this instance, ATC was wrongly informed that microlights could not enter Class D. However, it claims that from the replay of the voice tapes, the pilot did not make clear the extent of his predicament, ie the severity of the weather.

Chirp rightly pointed out that he could have declared an emergency. It said: “The reporter could have considered declaring an emergency to be permitted to enter controlled airspace.

“Many pilots are reluctant to do this because of concerns about the procedures and subsequent investigations. These concerns are misplaced. The declaration of an emergency helps controllers by allowing them to give priority to an aircraft that is in distress or simply running out of options.

“It is common for pilots under pressure to have difficulty remembering standard phraseology; if that is the case, plain language is perfectly acceptable in an emergency.

“So, there you have it – if you’re in trouble, don’t just shout, scream!

Regarding ATC being aware of the weather, the pilot commented: “The controller surely would have had weather radar in front of him, seeing the obvious precipitation I was explaining.”

CHIRP replied: “Modern radars employ processing techniques that filter out weather returns, and the controller would not have been aware of the presence or location of the heavy rain until advised by the reporter.”

Metal – never assume!

2 VFR into IMC

This account by a GA pilot describes what could easily have happened to the microlight pilot in the first story. I’ve copied and pasted it verbatim as I think it gets the point across very well.

“My plan of heading back the way I had come was no longer an option because the rain had enveloped that path, and I was now trapped in a pocket of clear sky.

“Eventually, after a few minutes of circling, a hole opened up, and I was able to find a clear path to the airfield and landed safely.”

“On reflection of this flight, I was quite surprised how quickly one can end up in IMC. What started out as simple shower-dodging quickly became a desperate situation that required instrument flying skills to get out of. I always thought it would never happen to me and that having an escape plan would be enough.

“I think a number of things can be learnt. Firstly, this patchy band of rain showers was in the forecast, I was naïve in thinking that I would be able to dodge the showers, especially without an IMC rating. Flying through a narrow gap of showers is not wise, weather is always changing and the option of turning around may not be there.

“Finally, I would recommend that any non-IMC rated pilot regularly practise the 180° turn in simulated IMC, in any type you fly (with a safety pilot, of course). When was the last time you practised it? I know that it saved me on this occasion.”

This report shows how quickly weather can change, and equally how quickly your options may be reduced.

Microlight pilots do not have the option to do a 180° turn on instruments, so the only thing you can do if you are surrounded by weather is to land.

The precautionary landing procedure taught in basic training, which is designed to minimise the inevitable risk of landing in unfamiliar field, should be used. Leave sufficient time to do this safely. If you’ve not practised one recently or can’t remember the routine, fly with an instructor and get some refresher training.
1. When a marshaller places both palms down and arms down then moves their arms up and down several times, what are they indicating?
   a. Move to guidance of next marshaller
   b. Slow down
   c. Turn to starboard

2. When operating under Special VFR, the aircraft must operate below a speed of:
   a. 250kt
   b. 165kt
   c. 140kt

3. What is the maximum total weight authorised for a single-seat microlight amphibian?
   a. 1315kg
   b. 390kg
   c. 330kg

4. A glider overtaking another aircraft in flight
   a. Must overtake on the left
   b. Must overtake on the right
   c. Can overtake on either side

5. The 1:250,000 scale Aeronautical Chart depicts airspace up to:
   a. 6000ft AMSL or FL100
   b. 5000ft AMSL or FL55
   c. 3100ft AMSL or FL100

All things wings

The latest from the BMAA Wings Awards

Hero of the month: David Cawdery

At the age of 71, and with more cash spent than I’d originally counted on, I had the piece of paper that said I was a pilot.

Now it was time to learn how to fly, but what next? Local flights were OK, but something more ambitious was required. Very supportive friends got me out of the circuit, and Shobdon, Old Warden and Feniand became possible, but there are only so many coffees and lunch flights that can hold your attention. Ambleside set in, and Kirkbride, the former RAF wartime airfield near Carlisle, became a 480nm two-day return trip target. Scary stuff, but a flying friend opted to be co-pilot, and many coffees later, a plan emerged and we started looking for a weather window. Despite all the anxiety, it went very well.

Looking back, it was planned to death, but this has now become standard practice and “planning, planning, planning” our mantra. So now, how to further expand? With perfect timing, the BMAA announced the Wings Scheme in early 2019. This was a challenge too good to miss, so I took the first step and prepared for the Bronze Award.

The supplementary requirements of the various stages of the scheme, being Safety, Flight Skills and Educational, provided a welcome return to basics and the possibility of sifting the cerebral stuff. A steady approach of study, review and application led me through the various stages of Bronze through to Diamond. Of course, there was considerable input advice from flying colleagues (not all sound or in agreement). Many of the tasks I had never done before, and created an amount of apprehension, aka fright, but what has to be done has to be done.

Looking back at my Wings journey, MATZ RT, planning Flying to France, flying to France and flying into a fully operational military airfield have been the highlights, and of course, planning has been the basis of all of them.

From thinking it unlikely at my age to learn to fly, then from GST to achieving my Diamond Wings, has taken just over four years. I’m delighted. Give it a go, and expand your horizons.

This month’s roll of honour

November has proved to be a busy month for awards in the BMAA Wings scheme! Many congratulations to Paul Dickinson, Stuart Waite, Nushin Elahi and Brendan Digney, all receiving bronze. Additionally, John McCluskey, Chris Simmons and Brendan Digney successfully completed the BMAA Strip Skills Flight Diploma.

A special mention goes to David Cawdery, above, for being the first recipient of the coveted diamond award. Huge congratulations to David, who will also be the first BMAA Wings Ambassador.

News

GASCo Safety Evenings this month are 27 January at Breighton airfield, 29 at Chatteris airfield and 30 at Ely and Lincoln airfields. The full 2020 list is at gasco.org.uk/flightsafetyinformation/safety­evenings.

Get involved in the BMAA Wings Scheme and make yourself a better pilot at bmaa.org/wings, or for more details email the scheme coordinator, BMAA Chief Inspector Bob Mott, at wings@bmaa.org.

Get your armchair rating

by John Teesdale

Save time and money by “armchair flying” at home

Practice your checklists and radio calls. Run through procedures like altimeter settings and circuit joins. Lessons cost around £2 a minute. Armchair flying is free. Well, unless you have to buy an armchair.

Don’t be afraid of the ground exams

Your instructor will help you through. Some schools offer group evening classes to cover the ground subjects, while others may offer one-to-one tuition. When a flying lesson is cancelled due to weather, consider using the time to study the ground subjects, either self-study or, if possible, with your instructor.

Ask questions

Your instructor will be pleased to help you. There are no stupid questions in aviation, and the more questions you ask, the faster you’ll learn and understand the material. In aviation, you’ll never learn to leave anything to chance. Everything has to be checked and double-checked to ensure the highest possible safety standards.

Mentoring

Take every opportunity to go flying as a passenger with an experienced qualified club pilot. This is not a substitute for instruction, but a chance to experience what lies ahead after all the hard work! You may be able to help with some flying tasks such as lookout, and when you have had suitable training, navigation.

Don’t forget to have fun!

Get your armchair rating by following these steps:

1. Practice your checklists and radio calls.
2. Run through procedures like altimeter settings and circuit joins.
3. Lessons cost around £2 a minute. Armchair flying is free.
4. Don’t be afraid of the ground exams.
5. Ask questions regularly to your instructor.
6. Take every opportunity to go flying as a passenger.
7. Don’t forget to have fun!

Let’s hear your stories

If you’ve had an accident, incident or close call that others might learn from, please send it to me at john@bmaa.org. We will not disclose your name if you would prefer to remain anonymous.

If your story is published in MIF, you will receive a free place on a ground-based BMAA course of your choosing. Safe flying!

Training tips

1. Practice your checklists and radio calls.
2. Run through procedures like altimeter settings and circuit joins.
3. Lessons cost around £2 a minute. Armchair flying is free.
4. Don’t be afraid of the ground exams.
5. Ask questions regularly to your instructor.
6. Take every opportunity to go flying as a passenger.
7. Don’t forget to have fun!

Get your armchair rating by following these steps:

1. Practice your checklists and radio calls.
2. Run through procedures like altimeter settings and circuit joins.
3. Lessons cost around £2 a minute. Armchair flying is free.
4. Don’t be afraid of the ground exams.
5. Ask questions regularly to your instructor.
6. Take every opportunity to go flying as a passenger.
7. Don’t forget to have fun!

Let’s hear your stories

If you’ve had an accident, incident or close call that others might learn from, please send it to me at john@bmaa.org. We will not disclose your name if you would prefer to remain anonymous.

If your story is published in MIF, you will receive a free place on a ground-based BMAA course of your choosing. Safe flying!
The past is your future

Check the history of your type for known faults, says Roger Pattrick

IN the technical office, we like to receive photographs showing defects, and just such an email was recently received from a council member.

It came with a photo, and said: “From time to time I make it a point to check the keel tube that lies behind the hang belt bracket on my flexwing.

“I’ve done this ever since I discovered a cracked keel tube on a Rainbow Safari trike that I frequently flew while working for Banka Sky in Africa.

“Fortunately, Banka Sky had/have a rigorous inspection program, without which this serious fracture may not have been detected.”

Cracks in structures are not unknown, and can occur for a variety of reasons, but once spotted, the part must be either repaired, such as a crack in an exhaust, or replaced. Never ignore it, as it will only get worse.

The wing keel story reminded me about an early problem regarding Quik wing keels, and then further thoughts about a crack that I once spotted in a drag link on a Gemini Flash 2 Alpha trike.

Like the extreme crack shown in the photograph, they were spotted before any serious damage was done and before the part failed completely, but how many owners of these aircraft are actually aware that these issues have occurred in the past?

In the case of the Quik it was in 2006, and in the case of the Gemini Flash 2 Alpha, 1993.

How do I know these dates? Simple: service bulletins published by the manufacturer warning operators of these aircraft about the problems. For example, the Gemini Flash 2 Alpha trike.

In both cases a fix was available, although in both cases this did not totally eliminate the problem, just extended the life of the component while still requiring regular checks on the airframe.

As aircraft get older and pass on to new owners, some of the knowledge gets lost, as does some of the paperwork. Some of these aircraft have now become SSSDRs, and therefore are outside the regulatory oversight of official inspectors, leaving the responsibility totally with the owner/pilot.

So do check through all of the paperwork that you get with your aircraft, no matter how dog-eared and weathered it is, and also check and read the old service bulletins that are still available on manufacturers’ websites.

You will find that some of these service bulletins list repeat inspections that are not in the operator’s manuals. In the case of Pegasus and Maimar aircraft, these service bulletins go back to the very early days of microlightng, but are still as relevant today as they were when first published, possibly more so for the deregulated aircraft. They also give an interesting insight into the history and development of the various lines of aircraft.

All responsible manufacturers publish safety data, so make a point of checking this information and seeing if it is relevant to your aircraft.

Finally, we at the BMAA Technical Office try to keep copies of manufacturers’ bulletins, so if you aren’t able to find them on a manufacturer’s website or the manufacturer has ceased trading and there is no longer any support, email us and we will try to supply the documents for you.

MICROQUIZ

1b slow down
2c 140kt
3c 3100ft
4c can overtake on either side
5b 5000ft AMSL or FL55

IN THE COCKPIT

A man for all continents

Geoff Hill interviews the multilingual and multitalented Donald Walker, Peru’s most famous export since Paddington Bear

I WAS born in Scotland, thanks to the Austrian corporal. When he became a nuisance, my parents joined the 601 who volunteered from Argentina to join the RAFVR or WAAF.

My Dad flew bombers “big enough to fit a double-decker bus under the nose.” My Mum plotted underground, which was not as intriguing as it sounds.

Before all that, I’d arrived in Argentina as a toddler and been sent to a British school, where lessons were in Spanish in the morning and English in the afternoon.

It was all change after lunch, when the Malvinas became the Falklands and the greater winter was no longer Gervanture, but Shakespeare. It was a relief to find that 2+2=4, morning and afternoon.

Our dog was quite famous in the neighborhood because it understood English.

On leaving school at 17, I joined Lloyds Banking Group, aka the black horse stable, in Buenos Aires. Its subsidiary was called Bank of London & South America (Banco de Londres y America del Sud) in Argentina.

That eventually led to work in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Norway, France and the UK, and when Lloyds put me out to pasture, I joined another bank in Luxembourg and worked there for seven years.

I’ve now been a retiree in East Sussex for 14 years, which is the longest time I have spent in one place.

I started flying in hang gliders, and my powered flying began when I arrived in Lima, Peru, and it soon became evident that the coastal desert was better suited to powered flight.

I was taught to fly in a Quicksilver MXL and went solo after seven hours. I never did learn to navigate, though, as it was totally unnecessary in a relatively narrow desert with a great big mountain range to the east and a great big ocean to the west.

I had a share in a Quicksilver MXL single-seater, then acquired an American Aerial Aerospace glider, and learnt to navigate behind Larry Newman, its designer and manufacturer, who had used it to make a National Geographic film about flying with condors in the Colca Valley.

I had to teach myself to myself to fly...
D  it, which must have been easy, because I didn't bend it.
The Eagle was left in Peru when I moved to Korea, where I acquired an Aerial Arts Cluster S. Flying it required the gift of a horrible whirly to the local garrison commander, who would send two concepts in a jeep to discourage anyone from interfering with our use of a lovely beach on the Yellow Sea as a runway.
The Cluser came with me to France and was based near Chartres. It was time to get a licence, and the course consisted of two flights of 20 and 30 minutes respectively.
The instructor spoke no English and I spoke only schoolboy French, as communication was difficult, but he must have reckoned I could fly, because he agreed me off and sent me to Orly for the written exam. A French ULM licence is valid for life, with no revalidation or medical requirements.
In Luxembourg, I flew a Quantum 15. With just one ULM airfield in the country, every land-requirements required crossing an international border, and it wasn't difficult to visit strips in Belgium, France and Germany on a single outing.
Back in the UK I built a Zenair CH601UL, and joined the Whitchill Farm Aero Club, with which I have made many memorable trips abroad.
A SportCruiser replaced the Zenair, and that in turn was replaced by my present aircraft, a Eurostar SL, which I am very happy with. Being based in Denmark in East Sussex means day trips to France can be made at short notice, which on a nice summer day makes the temptation of a good lunch and money back from HMRC difficult to resist.

What did you want to be when you grew up?
A motorcycle mechanic. That was scuppered by a family friend getting me a job in a bank.

Best and worst subjects at school?
Geography and chemistry.

Favourite book?
Cooper's Cope, by Alan Moorehead. It is the story of Burke and Wills, who attempted to cross Australia in 1860-61.

Favourite film?
Lawrence of Arabia.

Favourite country?
I am living in the UK by choice, so that answers the question.

Which two people have been most important in your life so far?
The one who had me and the one who had my kids.

Vices and virtues?
Many and none.

Any regrets?
No. Even the dumbest thing I ever did turned out very well. When my motor cycle skidded in the wet in Argentina and Jean and I both came off, I picked the bike up before my pillow passenger Jean made it quite clear I had to choose between her and the bike, so I did, and bought an engagement ring with the cash from the sale. In November we celebrated our golden wedding in Argentina, coincidentally driving past the scene of that fall.

What would be your perfect life?
Skipping UK winters.

Glass half full or half empty?
Half full.

Other hobbies?
Building aircraft: Zenair CH601UL, SportCruiser and Eurostar SL, completed, Vans RV9A bits languishing in the garage.

Who would you come back as in another lifetime?
Myself, good looking and rich.

Who would you invite to your ideal dinner party?
No use listing them, as my wife wouldn't have them.

Sum up your lesson for life in a sentence
I can't, Mike has the copyright.

Describe yourself in five words
75 and struggling to grow-up.

Earliest memory of flying?
A pleasure flight in a Cessna 172 over the Fens in 1968.

How did you get into microlighting?
I was into scuba diving on the Caribbean coast of Colombia, when my job took me to Quito, Ecuador, high up in the Andes. From my garden I could see hang gliders flying from Mount Pichincha, and decided to give it a go. Launching from 12,000ft to land at 9000ft made the flying interesting. It was then a slippery slope to microlighting, and my first aircraft was a Nomad designed by Rupert Sweet-Escott.

How long have you been in the BMAA?
Since 1988, when I was in Korea.

Why microlights?
I can afford one.

What do you fly?
A homebuilt Eurostar SL.

How many hours P1?
1100+

Which do you prefer, flexwing or three-axis?
Flexwing when it's warm, three-axis for going places.

Aviation highlights?
Eating guinea pig at roadside stalls after hang gliding in Ecuador, provoking German guard dogs at chicken farms by flying at 20ft above the surface so that they were snapping at the pusher prop; landing on a desert football pitch and waiting for the angry groundsman to get close before taking off in a cloud of sand; landing in a stadium to entertain disadvantaged kids; flying over our Lima neighbourhood so that my wife could get a picture from our 21st floor apartment without a telephoto lens; landing the Eagle engine-off and hands-off while flapping my arms in imitation of a bird, etc.

It was a lot of fun back then, with no regulations to worry about.

Oh, and a trip to Sweden with a small group from the Whitchill Farm Aero Club.

Worst moments?
Discovering the price of beer when I got to Sweden.

Have you ever crashed?
Yes, in four different countries. No drama, but much embarrassment.

Best aircraft you've flown?
Evektor Harmony LSA, big brother of the Eurostar.
Has the D got the X factor?

BEFORE microlights, the choice of aero engines for single- and two-seaters was extremely limited – essentially the Lycoming and Continental range, plus adaptations of the VW.

The early microlights used an enormous range of engines: our Mitchell B10 had an unsilenced Villiers 250 single, a Suzuki 185 twin, a Hunting single and a Valmet, all of which suffered myriad problems.

The Robin range proved very popular, but it was the Rotax two-strokes that were the first to provide reliable grunt at a reasonable price, coupled with the superb service from Skydrive.

When Rotax introduced the 912 four-stroke, it seemed absurdly sophisticated for our type of flying, but rapidly came to dominate the market.

Over the years, others (the Jabiru and UL ranges, for example) have attempted to penetrate the market, but none has provided a serious challenge to the now ubiquitous 912, which proved reliable from the start and has maintained that reputation throughout. Of course, the problem for all new types is that the best way to demonstrate reliability is to have sold a lot of engines.

The D-Motor is the latest challenger to the 912’s prime slot, and in theory has a great deal going for it. All four I’ve mentioned are flat-four four-strokes, and all deliver around 80-90hp, but there are important differences.

The simplest is the 2.2 litre Jabiru with its wet sump, direct drive, carburettor and air cooling.

Next up is the 2.6 litre UL260i which uses fuel injection instead of a carburettor, but is otherwise similar in configuration.

The 2.7 litre D-Motor also uses fuel injection, but is liquid-cooled, with a dry sump. It is unique in using the almost extinct sidevalve configuration, reckoning that you don’t need efficient airflow through the combustion chamber of a slow-revving engine.

The 1.2 litre Rotax is much the most complex, running half the cubic capacity at double the rpm to give equivalent power with an integral gearbox and a dry sump. It requires both air and liquid cooling and twin carburettors.

The Rotax 912 installation looks dreadfully complex, with hoses, ducts, cables and manifolds all...
Microlight Flying

Microlight Flying

Duplicated essentials are all the electrical and hydraulic valve lifters with their requirement for good oil supply. Most engines, no matter how much time is spent in design and development, require a “running-in” period of service in the field to iron out remaining issues. For some reason, the Rotax 912 did not seem to suffer in this way and was reliable from the very first. This wasn’t the case with the Jabiru and Werner four-strokes, for example.

The 912 was also very expensive, whether to be as reliable? In general, it certainly does, though even for a school aircraft that might do 500h a year, that’s two years down the line. For most private owners, it’s maintenance that’s likely to be carried out by their grandchildren. Disposable items — plugs, filters and oil — are all readily available on the mass market. The ECU has been designed by a specialist company and the data from it will soon be accessible by owners.

The company has been through a fairly tortuous history that involved at one point scraping all 50 engines in stock due to quality concerns, but the current organisation, dating from 2005 and headed by Peter Desmet, is well-funded and has a very well-equipped factory with all the latest CAD/CAM facilities and CNC machines, as used in F1 production facilities, ensuring high-quality components.

Peter comes from a motorsport background and is thoroughly familiar with what it takes to produce a power unit that will perform reliably in a wide variety of environments and working parameters.

Early units were given to operators around the world to validate the design in as wide a range of conditions as possible, and the resulting production types are today available around the world.

Origins

So where did the D-Motor come from? It was originally conceived as a power source for the Maschelin M38 Mousquito two-seat helicopter, which needed a unit that would operate in any orientation, so it used a dry sump, fuel injection and liquid cooling.

Although side valves haven’t been used in cars since the Ford Popular 100E ceased production in the early 1960s (and that engine was a relic of 1930s technology), adopting them for the D-Motor was an inspired decision. It made a big difference to the width of the unit, reduced the complexity and weight of the valve gear (there are only three parts – cam, follower and valve), but barely affected the efficiency, since the engine was turning so slowly.

It’s also oversquare, meaning that the stroke of the piston is less than the bore, which reduces its width even further and reduces the piston speed, and therefore the wear on the rings and cylinders.

Other technical details include Nikasil cylinder liners and a five-bearing crankshaft. Fuel injection is multipoint, improving efficiency.

For those who’ve only come across carburettors before, the induction system starts with a single large air filter connected to the throttle body and thence to the inlet manifold leading to all four cylinders. Fuel runs through a large filter into the pump which feeds the multi-point injectors at the cylinder heads.

All the essentials are duplicated — fuel pumps, ECUs, distributors and plugs. Electrical power can be supplied by the battery on its own for 10-40mm if the 230 alternator packs up.

The design philosophy has been to re-use as much experience as possible from endurance motor racing, which mirrors the long periods at high power that aeroplane engines are expected to tolerate.

It has also focused on low maintenance cost. The valve train, although mechanical, doesn’t require adjustment for the first 1000h. Even for a school aircraft

installed in its Sherwood Ranger biplane.

It was one of those winter days of calm winds and gin-clear skies that invite you skywards, and the Range was sitting outside waiting for me when I arrived.

The cowling is so narrow it’s hard to believe there’s a flat four in there. The large radiator underneath slightly mars the smooth lines, but is necessary because of the relatively slow speed of the Ranger.
and was developed for an earlier version of the engine with a three-bearing crank. The latest five-bearing crank runs much cooler, so it might be possible to make some improvements there, and other installations are skidder.

With the lid off, there’s plenty of room inside. The engine is mounted on four vibration isolators identical to those on the Jabiru and UL260. TLAC’s CEO, Paul Hendry-Smith, pointed out that TLAC has ensured that every single seal on the engine can be replaced without dismantling the engine, which will certainly ease the maintenance bills.

On the left side are the oil cooler and twin distributors. On the right side, mounted on the firewall, is a large fuel filter and twin fuel pumps which deliver fuel at fairly low pressure to the individual inlet ports. The oil and water tanks are on the centre line (the water tank comes from a VW!) and the air manifold is underneath, with a large doughnut-shaped air filter connected via a short length of SCAT hose.

The water pump is mounted on the front of the engine. Because the radiator is mounted on the lower cowling, access to the lower half of the engine bay takes a little longer. The twin ECU’s are mounted on the rear of the firewall and require a headfirst dive into the front cockpit to get access.

All in all, it’s a very neat installation, and – at least according to the book figures – the lightest of all four.

Test

So how does it go? I was able to witness the engine from the ground and the cockpit and found it a very pleasurable experience. Of course, so much depends on the individual installation that it’s hard to concentrate on the effect of the engine itself, but I’ll do my best. The fact that I tested this self-same machine when it was Rotax-powered (albeit some 10 years ago) obviously helps.

Starting is a doddl from warm – she fired on first compression with the throttle just cracked open and settled into a quiet burble at 700-800rpm with minimal noise or vibration.

Opening the throttle produces an instant response; the ECU’s seem well adjusted to provide instant power without hesitation. The three-bladed Helex propeller produced a good deal more noise than the engine, which even at high power was relatively subdued.

Test pilot Jamie Milne demonstrated it first and settled into the cockpit, I was impressed with the instant response and the feeling of confidence the engine inspired. The climb rate was excellent, and at all times the sound levels were very low.

An open-cockpit aircraft is hardly a typical environment to try this out and it was definitely too cold to consider removing my headgear, but I would be absolutely confident about flying without hearing protection – it should be a delight.

Of course this is an engine test, so I won’t tell you what a huge pleasure it was to renew my acquaintance with the Sherwood Ranger, and the impossibility of resisting the siren call to throw her around a bit due to the wonderfully light aileron response.

It’s an utterly separate experience from sitting in an enclosed cockpit, watching the miles tick off your GPS and wondering what food is available at the airport cafe.

I’m not allowed to tell you about the visceral connection you feel with the machine, and the machine’s relation to the air around her; let me just mention the knowledge that she’s perfectly capable of making the horizon perform a dance around you and gives you the feeling that the Ranger will remain perfectly well-behaved, whatever you ask her to do. So I won’t. It was too cold to spend much time in the air, anyway.

Conclusions

How do you try and make firm conclusions about an engine in its own, without the airframe and peripherals and without significant reliability data? It’s hard.

It’s pretty clear that the D-Motor will generally be a lightweight installation, though the individual weight will depend on the mounts, the coolant and oil circuits, and even the electrical installation (have you tried weighing battery cables?).

The relative price, too, will vary, so it’s hard to give precise data. And while quoting horsepower from the dynamometer is certainly objective evidence, what one actually needs is thrust, and this will vary hugely depending on the particular propeller used. It’s fun to compare these with the 1908 le Rhône rotary engine which is of similar power but displaces 11 litres, turning at only 1230rpm. It produces more thrust than any of them because of its huge 2.5m dia propeller, compared with 1.7 or 1.75m on these modern units.

The same, of course, applies to fuel consumption; figures quoted from the dynamometer are of relatively little use in the real world.

Perhaps even more important than performance figures are reliability and continuing support for the life of your engine, and it’s so hard to compete with the 30,000+ Rotax 912s delivered, which offer unrivalled confidence on both fronts.

But it’s clear that Peter Desmet is aware of these issues. His company offers a two-year warranty with every unit, the organisation is well-funded, and every effort is going into ensuring a sufficiently large market penetration to establish the D-Motor as a worthy competitor to the Rotax 912 range.

D-Motor is keen to build a reputation for top-quality support for its product, and TLAC is a well-established and technically qualified maintenance organisation for commercial light aircraft, so it should be well placed to provide that support in the UK.

For homebuilders and manufacturers, the D-Motor deserves careful consideration.

Comparison of engine parameters and prices

Figures quoted below are supplied by UK agents for each type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Max continuous power (hp)</th>
<th>Dry weight (kg)</th>
<th>Cost (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rotax 912</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>£16,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotax 912S</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>£16,261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotax 912S Sport</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>£19,469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UL260i</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>60.1</td>
<td>£18,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UL260iS</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>£20,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-Motor L26</td>
<td>97.5</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>£20,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Introductory price for D-Motor. Goes up to €21,600 (£18,156 at time of writing) in 6 months.
To fly is to live

A dicky ticker brought on palpitations for Anthony Preston, but there was worse to come.

A TIME came when I began to notice the medical turning up too often. Was it worse to come
Anthony Preston

A dicky ticker brought on palpitations
There had been three mornings in a row with palpitations, and calling it “palpitations”. Young ladies, all a-flutter and AF were among them.

A dicky ticker brought on palpitations
Dr. Nightingale was obliged to squeal on me.

A dicky ticker brought on palpitations
I contacted him after the event.

A dicky ticker brought on palpitations
He got used to it. You get used to everything.

A dicky ticker brought on palpitations
To keep the magic alive, I had joined a syndicate at Beccles. It’s with G-MAMM, the C42 in which I carried out most of my instructing there.

A dicky ticker brought on palpitations
My much-revered father-in-law, the academic Major Samuel Hynes, had died in Princeton, NJ, a week earlier at the age of 93. He too had been an instructor, with the US Marines, so we had that in common, but he went away beyond, having flown 78 missions in fighter/bombers in the Eastern theatre during the Second World War, earning himself a DFC.

A dicky ticker brought on palpitations
On a Sunday morning, I woke up with an idea. I wasn’t sure it was a good one, but the more I thought about it, the more appealing it seemed. What about a modest tribute to a giant of a man from the other side of the pond? Let’s do it.

A dicky ticker brought on palpitations
I booked the aircraft and unhooked the portrait of Sam from the wall in my house in Aldeburgh, placing it in the passenger seat of the car.

A dicky ticker brought on palpitations
The late Samuel Hynes, DFC, pilot, academic and Anthony Preston’s father-in-law

Above

The late Samuel Hynes, DFC, pilot, academic and Anthony Preston’s father-in-law

To keep the magic alive, I had joined a syndicate at Beccles. It’s with G-MAMM, the C42 in which I carried out most of my instructing there.

My much-revered father-in-law, the academic Major Samuel Hynes, had died in Princeton, NJ, a week earlier at the age of 93. He too had been an instructor, with the US Marines, so we had that in common, but he went away beyond, having flown 78 missions in fighter/bombers in the Eastern theatre during the Second World War, earning himself a DFC.

On a Sunday morning, I woke up with an idea. I wasn’t sure it was a good one, but the more I thought about it, the more appealing it seemed. What about a modest tribute to a giant of a man from the other side of the pond? Let’s do it.

I booked the aircraft and unhooked the portrait of Sam from the wall in my house in Aldeburgh, placing it in the passenger seat of the car.

The late Samuel Hynes, DFC, pilot, academic and Anthony Preston’s father-in-law

Above
AUTUMN and winter flying weather can be challenging, with rain, fog, gales and, in autumn 2019, a bit more rain.

But despite the challenges, when it’s good, it can be exceptional. Cold, crisp mornings improve aircraft performance and provide a stable atmosphere, with unlimited visibility and incredibly colourful landscapes, with maybe a bit of snow if you’re lucky. All that, and no pesky bugs to clean off, make it a wonderful time to fly.

The arrival of high pressure at the end of a very wet November saw me and flying pal Duncan McDougall set off from Eshott in the Eurostar for the west coast of Scotland.

Accompanied by wingman Kev Waugh in his battle-sharp grey Eurostar SL, we flew the well-trodden path over the snow-covered Cheviots and beautiful Southern Uplands to the Prestwick-Glasgow gap.

After an hour and a half of very relaxed flying in glorious sunshine and calm winds, we exited the gap and coasted out over Hunterston nuclear power station, clearing the associated SFC-2000ft Restricted Area EGR 515 before descending into the Bute strip.

Despite all our rain, local pilot friend Bob Logan had told me that the Prestwick area had been pretty dry and right enough, Bute was in very good condition. Bob was meant to join us, but his syndicate Eurostar lives outside at Prestwick, and he and partner Sandy were busy removing poor G-CENW from a block of ice.

Pressing on, we continued north at low level for sightseeing. The beautiful scenery was bathed in incredible autumnal colours and I was busy using up pixels on my trusty Nikon D300.

I recently retired my 11-year-old D300 after some 450,000 shots (I know Mrs K feels like she’s sat through them all) and picked my latest secondhand one up really cheap despite it only having a shutter count of 3000. iPhones and GoPro stills produce some excellent results, but I still love the control afforded by a digital SLR.

Heading low up the west coast of Scotland on a sunny winter’s day is such a treat and a full-on assault on the senses. Passing Lochgilphead, we fly the nine-mile Crinan Canal, which provides a short cut for vessels from Glasgow to the west coast without having to navigate the Mull of Kintyre. It’s also a good bad-weather flying route when the cloud is on the surrounding peaks.

For the next half hour we orbit historic castles, picturesque harbours and islands and yachts under way, before arriving at Oban. Right on cue, our great friend Paul Thompson also arrives from Northern Ireland in his wonderful new Eurostar SL to meet us.

The Oban landing fee for microlights remains a reasonable £11. Many of us will know Paul Keegan, who had the fuel contract for many years. Fair play to Paul: he always sat you down after an expensive avgas refuel and consoled you with a cup of tea and a Jammy Dodger!

However, his contract has come to an end, and the airport is currently without avgas. It hopes to have it available again in the spring.

The short days of winter do require disciplined timekeeping, and Kev heads off on one of the free airport bikes to pre-order fish and chips at the Lochend Arms Hotel, which is only a 10-minute walk away. As a result, we are fed shortly after the restaurant opens at midday, and in no time are back at Oban for the return journey south.

We enjoy an equally relaxed 2.5h flight home to Eshott with Paul, as Paul peels off into the setting sun back home to Northern Ireland. You’ve got to love winter flying: fan-bloomin’tastic!
Three plus four equals five

No, Cheshire Flyer David Creedy hasn’t lost his maths marbles. That’s three aircraft, four countries and five days.

The aim was to combine the annual pilgrimage to the LAA rally with a short break, and by a fabulous coincidence, the largest fly market in Europe was being held in Lille over the same weekend.

A quick look at the chart revealed a grass strip, Marcq en Baroeul, located just north of Lille city centre, and a plan was born.

The event was well organised and well attended, and the air market in Europe was being held in Lille over the same weekend. Last-minute research revealed that Lille’s Marcq en Baroeul was closed to visitors due to a major event. After various communications with our alternate, the main international airport at Lille, the airport management decided that we were not the sort of aircraft they wished to entertain. Shocked and disgusted at the betrayal, we left when a scuffle broke out at the entrance.

A flight plan was filed for Le Touquet. With a strong headwind merging the LAA magazine with the eminently readable MF.

The boys at the LAA rally were, Manchester radar invited us to route directly to our landing site through controlled airspace – lovely people.

A version of this article appeared in Cheshire Flyer, the brillant monthly club magazine edited by Sharon Cox.

Day 1: Anyone seen my wallet?

For once no bit fell off my plane as we warmed up for a windy departure from Hawkstone airfield. The simple arrival procedure worked amazingly well despite the odd pilot being unable to distinguish left and right, hard or soft landing.

Embarrassed and disillusioned at the safety decision to land on the hard, while another of the formation heading for the grass demonstrated an exemplary go-round.

All aircraft were parked safely, and pilots retired to the clubhouse for a quick beer before the transport arrived. A stroll around the historic town, a few beers, a visit to the magnificent cathedral and an excellent dinner in good company made for a relaxed evening.

Day 2: Beer, chocolate and boats. Perfect

Having to move on by late afternoon, we decided to continue country-hopping and fly to MIDDEN ZEELAND in the Netherlands.

Day 3: It wasn’t us who started the fight, officer. Honest

Having to move on by late afternoon, we decided to continue country-hopping and fly to MIDDEN ZEELAND in the Netherlands.

Day 4: Just call me unstoppable

Time and weather meant that reluctantly we had to leave the Netherlands, but not without borrowing tools and brake fluid from the Friendly maintenance staff and fixing the Eurostar brakes.}

Facing page Ursel club

This page

1 The boys at the LAA rally
2 En route to MIDDEN ZEELAND
3 Ursel airfield
4 The route
Our annual pilgrimage this year took us to Magaluf, a very European enclave and the beating heart of Majorca.

Gathering a squadron this time was a hard job, but we ended up with three planes and five pilots: Martin Mosley, Jason Williams, James Horne, Alan Lindsay, and me. Yes, there was a spare seat, which is such a rarity for us that we are thinking of putting it on eBay next year. Read on, and you may well decide to put in a serious bid for 2020.

Our rendezvous was Martin’s airstrip at Headon, Notts, and we left at 10am for a good, smooth flying, coasting in over the Côte d’Argent. It was this position in our flight that, depending on how busy the military are, we are handed over to Cazaaux, the French MATZ close by, who coordinated the rest of our flight into Mimizan.

On landing, we were met by my good friend Kevin Waugh, who flies a Eurostar out of Eshott and was on holiday with his family, and we had dinner in a lovely restaurant on the Mimizan Plage on the Côte d’Argent.

The following day, we filed flight plans for Andorra airfield, which entailed a long flight over the Pyrenees, tracking south for Andorra airfield, which we could just make out to our north with 50 miles to run.

Andorra airfield is 2650ft above sea level, and on a long final from 4000ft in turbulent air, we needed our seat belts tightly fastened.

All safely down, it was only a short ride to La Seu d’Urgell, where we found a simple hotel to have a meal, followed by an early night. This was to be the lull before the storm.

The next morning, we coasted out between Girona to the north and Barcelona to the south for a 13nm water crossing with not a boat in sight, thanks to a huge swell and white caps.

Another 30min flying and we reached the Majorca coastline and descended for Son Bonet. A friend from Andorra, that day and at Son Bonet, I believe that this airfield was the main airport for Palma many moons ago.

When we landed it was very quiet, probably because of the gale blowing down the runway. But it’s a friendly airport, and when Martin discovered he had a flat tyre on his SportCruiser, the lads in the hangar soon managed to fix it for him. Not long afterwards we were having a beer or two sitting outside a bar in Magaluf.

As I have previously mentioned, we never book accommodation in advance on these adventures, since weather or mechanical issues can always ground or divert you.

So with a careful few minutes scanning the local hotels online, plus a bit of legwork, it wasn’t long before we were in a wonderful fully inclusive four-star hotel close to the Punta Ballena, aka the Magaluf Strip.

We had a fantastic three days and nights there, then returned to Son Bonet, only to find that the carb floats in James’ relatively new CT had failed. A local Rotax engineer had two but couldn’t get them to us till the following day – good news for us, as it meant we had to spend another night in Magaluf.

We finally got away from Son Bonet mid-afternoon, over the very humpy mountain range, and fairly quickly left Majorca and its turbulence. A slight headwind meant that our water crossing to Montpellier was a long one, but we eventually coasted in over the Camargue for an interesting landing at Montpellier Candillargues Aero Club. This is a spectacular vast area of the Rhône delta, covering nearly 410 square miles and famous for its white horses, black bulls and pink flamingos.

We dined that evening on the banks of the Lez, a coastal river that flows through Montpellier, far from the madding strip of Magaluf.

Leaving the following morning, we had very warm, clear conditions, climbing for a long flight over the Massif Central and dropping in at Vimory for lunch.

Then it was the final leg of the day, 430nm to Le Touquet, and for our last engine had two but couldn’t get them to us till the following day – good news for us, as it meant we had to spend another night in Magaluf.

We finally got away from Son Bonet mid-afternoon, over the very humpy mountain range, and fairly quickly left Majorca and its turbulence. A slight headwind meant that our water crossing to Montpellier was a long one, but we eventually coasted in over the Camargue for an interesting landing at Montpellier Candillargues Aero Club. This is a spectacular vast area of the Rhône delta, covering nearly 410 square miles and famous for its white horses, black bulls and pink flamingos.

We dined that evening on the banks of the Lez, a coastal river that flows through Montpellier, far from the madding strip of Magaluf.

Leaving the following morning, we had very warm, clear conditions, climbing for a long flight over the Massif Central and dropping in at Vimory for lunch.

Then it was the final leg of the day, 360nm to Le Touquet, and for our last night’s final gastronomic experience in France, where else but in our old Indian favourite, Le Kashmir on Paris-Plage?

The flight back to Headon was an easy one, with excellent visibility and everything that can make flying most enjoyable.

Summing up, I can only describe the hospitality we encountered from our French and Spanish neighbours as first class.
A long time ago, in a universe not so far away...

by Norman Burr

Early in January, 31 hang glider dealers gathered near Phoenix, Arizona, for a seminar, the first in a series of monthly meetings. The occasion was the introduction of the EAGLE, Electro flyer’s new powered ultralight, or “aerial car” as they call it. In order to qualify for an EASA ultralight, it was not necessary to attend. But attendance alone was no guarantee. Several potential dealers were turned away, each in force because it was felt they would not project a proper image for the company.

During the three-day seminar, sponsors conducted several clinics to educate the dealers. They included: prop, engine tuning, aerodynamics and product development.

Conceived by Durman-born Ronald Dink of Scarsmarth (with design modifications and production by Larry Renshaw), the Eagle is the first modern ultralight to use a damped – the funny-looking extension from the tail boom that makes onlookers think it’s flying backwards. But therein lies the secret. Flying at a higher angle of incidence than the main wing, the canard stalls first producing a mild porpoising, unlike conventional airfoils. It is felt this attribute extends the margin of safety for learning pilots. Many of those present had never flown in a converged 17% injury-free aircraft.

All flying took place at a private gravel airstrip, during which time three light aircraft landed in order to better inspect the Eagle. This evoked the comment from one dealer that the Cessnas “required 20 times the landing space, were twice the hassle, five times the cost and only half the fun” as the ultralights.

Also present and flying power, but not directly participating in the seminar was Dave Kilbourne, who 10 years ago was the first person to earn a foot-launched hang glider. And it was evident that ultralight flying had come a long way when, on the last day, four Eagles throttled back at 100 ft and thermalled to 600 ft.

40 YEARS AGO

A long time ago, in a universe not so far away...

by Norman Burr

JUST after its inaugural meeting in autumn 1979, the doughty individuals who founded the BMAA set about producing a bi-monthly magazine, so exactly 40 years ago the first edition of Flightline dropped on members’ doormats.

Our plan is to run 40 Years Ago every other month, picking out interesting articles and snippets from each issue in turn. I wasn’t involved in microlights in 1980 – I joined the association in 1982 – but as I seem to have acquired the title of de facto BMAA archivist, the pleasant task of producing this feature falls to me.

The first editor was Dave Thomas, whose BMAA membership number was and remains 0001, appropriately enough. His first issue ran to just 12 pages, of which three are reproduced here. Print quality was poor – my scans of the pages are, believe it or not, in some cases better than the originals – but it’s the content that matters.

The editorial on page 3, for example, details the very first meeting held with the CAA regarding legislative matters. As their aircraft had evolved from unpowered and unregulated hang gliders, the first microlight pilots enjoyed a huge degree of freedom. All they had to do was obey air law, just like everyone else in the sky.

There was no need to display registration letters, no need for insurance, no airspace requirements and no need for a licence.

There was no obligation to get trained either, though only the foolish took advantage of that particular freedom. The coming months would show that there were enough of those to attract a disproportionately-large amount of adverse publicity, but in early 1980 optimism abounded, as you can read.

The Eagle has such an impact...
I set down to draw a line on the map, noting with a moment of nostalgia that it wasn’t far from the route I’d flown to that great airfield Priory Farm, to visit my brother near Diss. I had to bend the line to miss controlled airspace etc, then measure the compass readings for lines, note features such as towns, river etc, and finally fill up with fuel, check the plane for one last time, and go. Yes, it was murky, but vis was good enough to safely clear the north edge of Stoke on Trent. Then came the high ground north of Coalon Moor, which was OK, but marginal. I slid through a gap at 500ft, thinking of the risk of carb icing, keeping an eye out for fields and listening to every beat of the motor. The ground dropped away below, the cloudbase actually rose and thinned from then on, and easy poxy: Carsington Water, north side of Nottingham, spot Grantham and keep south, then set a new heading for Spalding/ Holbeach, the east-west road and Wingland. Er, where the **** was it?

I sat down to a good home, and she owed me nothing. I’d paid £6000 for her 12 years ago, and had loads of flying every year, the last few as an SSDR, so wonderfully cheap. The ground dropped away below, the cloudbase actually rose and thinned from then on, and easy poxy: Carsington Water, north side of Nottingham, spot Grantham and keep south, then set a new heading for Spalding/ Holbeach, the east-west road and Wingland. Er, where the **** was it?

I sat down to draw a line on the map, noting with a moment of nostalgia that it wasn’t far from the route I’d flown to that great airfield Priory Farm, to visit my brother near Diss. I had to bend the line to miss controlled airspace etc, then measure the compass readings for lines, note features such as towns, river etc, and finally fill up with fuel, check the plane for one last time, and go. Yes, it was murky, but vis was good enough to safely clear the north edge of Stoke-on-Trent. Then came the high ground north of Coalon Moor, which was OK, but marginal. I slid through a gap at 500ft, thinking of the risk of carb icing, keeping an eye out for fields and listening to every beat of the motor. The ground dropped away below, the cloudbase actually rose and thinned from then on, and easy poxy: Carsington Water, north side of Nottingham, spot Grantham and keep south, then set a new heading for Spalding/ Holbeach, the east-west road and Wingland. Er, where the **** was it?

I sat down to draw a line on the map, noting with a moment of nostalgia that it wasn’t far from the route I’d flown to that great airfield Priory Farm, to visit my brother near Diss. I had to bend the line to miss controlled airspace etc, then measure the compass readings for lines, note features such as towns, river etc, and finally fill up with fuel, check the plane for one last time, and go. Yes, it was murky, but vis was good enough to safely clear the north edge of Stoke-on-Trent. Then came the high ground north of Coalon Moor, which was OK, but marginal. I slid through a gap at 500ft, thinking of the risk of carb icing, keeping an eye out for fields and listening to every beat of the motor. The ground dropped away below, the cloudbase actually rose and thinned from then on, and easy poxy: Carsington Water, north side of Nottingham, spot Grantham and keep south, then set a new heading for Spalding/ Holbeach, the east-west road and Wingland. Er, where the **** was it?

I sat down to draw a line on the map, noting with a moment of nostalgia that it wasn’t far from the route I’d flown to that great airfield Priory Farm, to visit my brother near Diss. I had to bend the line to miss controlled airspace etc, then measure the compass readings for lines, note features such as towns, river etc, and finally fill up with fuel, check the plane for one last time, and go. Yes, it was murky, but vis was good enough to safely clear the north edge of Stoke-on-Trent. Then came the high ground north of Coalon Moor, which was OK, but marginal. I slid through a gap at 500ft, thinking of the risk of carb icing, keeping an eye out for fields and listening to every beat of the motor. The ground dropped away below, the cloudbase actually rose and thinned from then on, and easy poxy: Carsington Water, north side of Nottingham, spot Grantham and keep south, then set a new heading for Spalding/ Holbeach, the east-west road and Wingland. Er, where the **** was it?

I sat down to draw a line on the map, noting with a moment of nostalgia that it wasn’t far from the route I’d flown to that great airfield Priory Farm, to visit my brother near Diss. I had to bend the line to miss controlled airspace etc, then measure the compass readings for lines, note features such as towns, river etc, and finally fill up with fuel, check the plane for one last time, and go. Yes, it was murky, but vis was good enough to safely clear the north edge of Stoke-on-Trent. Then came the high ground north of Coalon Moor, which was OK, but marginal. I slid through a gap at 500ft, thinking of the risk of carb icing, keeping an eye out for fields and listening to every beat of the motor. The ground dropped away below, the cloudbase actually rose and thinned from then on, and easy poxy: Carsington Water, north side of Nottingham, spot Grantham and keep south, then set a new heading for Spalding/ Holbeach, the east-west road and Wingland. Er, where the **** was it?

I sat down to draw a line on the map, noting with a moment of nostalgia that it wasn’t far from the route I’d flown to that great airfield Priory Farm, to visit my brother near Diss. I had to bend the line to miss controlled airspace etc, then measure the compass readings for lines, note features such as towns, river etc, and finally fill up with fuel, check the plane for one last time, and go. Yes, it was murky, but vis was good enough to safely clear the north edge of Stoke-on-Trent. Then came the high ground north of Coalon Moor, which was OK, but marginal. I slid through a gap at 500ft, thinking of the risk of carb icing, keeping an eye out for fields and listening to every beat of the motor. The ground dropped away below, the cloudbase actually rose and thinned from then on, and easy poxy: Carsington Water, north side of Nottingham, spot Grantham and keep south, then set a new heading for Spalding/ Holbeach, the east-west road and Wingland. Er, where the **** was it?
D Council Airwaves

My 2020 Vision

Bill Davis looks forward to a resurrection of flexwing flying

I can’t believe that 20 years has passed since the millennium year 2000. It was a significant time for everyone in the historical context as we passed from one century into another. For me, however, the new century was a turning point in my life when I was offered a flight in a flexwing and discovered the thrill of flying.

The end result of that flight was a mid-life career change into aviation, an instatable addiction to flexwing flying, a move to Africa to fly tourists over Victoria Falls and much more. In the 20 years since the millennium, the microlight landscape has changed significantly. We now have faster and heavier aircraft that can travel greater distances, three-axis microlights have become a viable and competitive alternative to Group A aircraft, and with the proposed increase in MAUW to 600kg, we will likely see 2020 as the start of a new era in microlight aviation.

As a new member of the council, I’ve come to appreciate the valuable work that the BMAA staff have done to progress all the positive changes that have taken place since I became a microlight pilot.

So what is my vision for the future?

I volunteered at both BMAA Countryfile events this past summer. We were fortunate to have had a flexwing on display at both events, and the public feedback confirmed my belief that flexwing flying has a public appeal that’s unequaled by many other forms of flying.

I sometimes hear from flying schools that the days of flexwing flying are numbered, and that the market for events like these is one that I have been a part of would say otherwise. People are attracted to our sport when they see flexwings, and that attraction is as strong today as it was 20 years ago.

Therefore, for my 2020 Vision, I strongly support the proposal that entry into the Flexwing sector be supported and managed by the CAA within the UK.

GFAA has produced a first draft paper outlining how this sector is being reviewed, and the CAA has published its views on the structures needed to support and manage such aviation within the UK.

Although the vision is that manned aviation will continue to grow, there is a great comfort of three-axis flying and the ability to train in weather conditions that might preclude training in flexwings has an appeal to many flying schools.

However, there is an argument to be made for flexwing training based on the buzz factor and the need for a broader market appeal. As a skier, I have friends who genuinely enjoy cross-country skiing, but my personal preference is to feel the wind in my face and to experience the speed building as I manage the twists and turns of downhill skiing. It’s much the same in aviation, so let’s not ignore those potential pilots who would be drawn to microlighting if more flexwing training was on offer.

I suggest we look at flexwing aviation advocates on the council. The council is pro-microlighting in all its forms, as am I, but I’ll continue to help find new ways to encourage flexwing interest in training and development so that the buzz factor remains. Our recent initiative to offer a flexwing instructor bursary is a step in the right direction. Many of our members will have their own ideas on raising the profile of flexwing flying, and I would encourage them to make contact with us.

As we approach exciting times ahead, I wish all members a happy festive season and safe flying in 2020.

Airspace: our final frontier

As always, airspace matters were no less important as we moved towards the end of the year. As part of the General Aviation Alliance (GAA), we help to fund an Airspace Programme Manager who keeps tabs on current airspace change proposals (ACP) and alerts us to those that could have an impact on recreational aviation.

At the moment, there are 190 of possible interest to us. I’m grateful to those who have contacted me with offers to help, and I will be in contact again soon. Just in case you missed it, Leeds Bradford has now changed its aerodrome regulations, and microlights are welcome to use the airport.

Following discussions with us, as you may have read in John Teeddale’s Safety column, the airport has also changed regulations that required ATC to refuse entry to microlights into its Class D airspace. Thanks, LBA.

As well as traditional ACPs such as Oxford, Bristol Norton, Gosport, etc, a new form of airspace is beginning to be discussed. U-Space airspace is intended to be a low level (up to 100ft AGL) in volume, on which unmanned Aircraft Vehicles (UAVs), will operate, ultimately autonomously.

EASA has produced a first draft paper outlining how this is operating, and the CAA has published its views on the structures needed to support and manage such aviation within the UK.

Although the vision is that manned aviation will continue to grow, there is a great comfort of three-axis flying and the ability to train in weather conditions that might preclude training in flexwings has an appeal to many flying schools. However, there is an argument to be made for flexwing training based on the buzz factor and the need for a broader market appeal. As a skier, I have friends who genuinely enjoy cross-country skiing, but my personal preference is to feel the wind in my face and to experience the speed building as I manage the twists and turns of downhill skiing. It’s much the same in aviation, so let’s not ignore those potential pilots who would be drawn to microlighting if more flexwing training was on offer.

I suggest we look at flexwing aviation advocates on the council. The council is pro-microlighting in all its forms, as am I, but I’ll continue to help find new ways to encourage flexwing interest in training and development so that the buzz factor remains. Our recent initiative to offer a flexwing instructor bursary is a step in the right direction. Many of our members will have their own ideas on raising the profile of flexwing flying, and I would encourage them to make contact with us.

As we approach exciting times ahead, I wish all members a happy festive season and safe flying in 2020.

We believe that it is important to work out the detail before we ask the question about a merger

Merger matters

On the subject of whether the BMAA should merge with the LAA, we have continued to have discussions and drawn up detailed plans as to how a merger would actually work. These include where we would operate from, how the new association would be managed by a board, how it would be staffed, articles of association and rules to reflect the wider scope of aircraft and members’ interests, creating a financial plan, considering options for a magazine, and many other details both large and small that we believe our members want to, and should, know before deciding how to vote.

We believe that working out the detail before we ask the question is far more important than asking the question and then working out the details. We hope that you will agree and be patient with us.

To our association.

Dedicated

FLIGHT PLANS

Rosalie Ireland, 0793 953 351, roseliedy@hotmail.co.uk.

Feb 6: OTHERTOWN AIRFIELD. Gasco Safety Evening, starts 7.30pm. Contact Peter Balmer, 07799 404 234, pete@pbalmer.co.uk.

Feb 7: SANDOWN AIRFIELD. Gasco Safety Evening, starts 7.30pm. Contact Terry Slack, 07719 566 604, terry@slackandmerriman.com.

Feb 13: SNITTERFIELD AIRFIELD. Gasco Safety Evening, organised by Stratford Gliding Club. Contact Andy Bellamy, 07808 410 203, chamron@stratfordgliding.co.uk or andy.bellamy60@gmail.com.

Feb 17: CLOCHEE SAFETY EVENING, organised by Cheshire Flyers, starts 8pm, at the Wheatsheaf pub. Contact Steve Rosser, 07979 226 219, steve.r@lsa-technology.co.uk.

Feb 19: ANDREWSFORD GASCO SAFETY EVENING, organised by West London Aero Club. Contact Charles Prince, oliver.prince@sherburnaeroclub.co.uk.

Feb 25: WHITE WALTHAM AIRFIELD. Gasco Safety Evening, organised by West London Aero Club. Contact Chris Boyle or VLC Operations, 07979 781 621 or 01865 327 027, tcm2010@hotmail.com.

Feb 26: LONDON. Gasco Safety in the City, Airspace Infringements Awareness Presentation, starts 7.30pm at Hayward Aviation, EC1N 8AF. Spaces limited to 60; to register contact Rosemary Tucker, druckley@hayward.net.

Feb 26: EARLS COLE. Gasco Safety Evening, organised by Anglian Flight Centre. Contact Katie Denham, 07973 305 929, katiedenham@hotmail.co.uk.

Feb 26: 43 January 2020
Contact Kristin, 0243 755139, aeroclub@goodwood.com.

21 Apr: SUTTON BANK AIRFIELD. Gaseo Safety Evening, organised by Yorkshire Gliding Club, starts 7:30pm. Contact Chris Royce or WAC Operations, 07979 782012, ccy@yorkshiregliding.com.

22 Apr: KILDONAN. Gaseo Safety Evening, organised by Leading Edge Aviation, starts 7:30pm in Airways House, London Oxford Airport. Contact Gregory Moor, 07862 874844, gregory.moor@leadingedgeaviation.com.

23 Apr: MANCHESTER BARTON Gaseo Safety Evening, starts 7:30pm in Runway Cafe & Bar. Free entry but bookings through gaseoaviation-safety-evening.tickets. Contact 0761 789 1762, eventbookings@cityairportltd.co.uk.

3-5 May: PPSHAM. Microlight Trade Fair including BMAA AGM at 1pm on the Saturday. More information later on bmaa.org.


4-6 Sep: SYWELL. LAA Rally. More information later on bmaa.org.

No fixed date: Isle of Man Fly-out. A Northern Aerosports event visit to http://microflying.co.uk. Visit one of Scotland’s most beautiful islands. Hotel on site and accommodation nearby, free camping and Tobenemoor nightflight! All aviators welcome for a social and a few beers. Contact Chester Potts on 07706 072188.

International events


21-23 Aug: AUSTRIA. Rotax Fly-in. Demonstration flights at Wels airport with the 9125 and 9155 engines, company tour of state-of-the-art BRP-Rotax factory in Guns kirchen, visit to a new centenary exhibition, simulations, Q&A sessions and evening’s entertainment with barbecue and live band. Details: fly-rotax.com.

Visicover is a unique service that lets you buy and manage your fixed or flexing microlight insurance online whenever it suits you.

International events


21-23 Aug: AUSTRIA. Rotax Fly-in. Demonstration flights at Wels airport with the 9125 and 9155 engines, company tour of state-of-the-art BRP-Rotax factory in Guns kirchen, visit to a new centenary exhibition, simulations, Q&A sessions and evening’s entertainment with barbecue and live band. Details: fly-rotax.com.

Visicover is a unique service that lets you buy and manage your fixed or flexing microlight insurance online whenever it suits you.

International events


21-23 Aug: AUSTRIA. Rotax Fly-in. Demonstration flights at Wels airport with the 9125 and 9155 engines, company tour of state-of-the-art BRP-Rotax factory in Guns kirchen, visit to a new centenary exhibition, simulations, Q&A sessions and evening’s entertainment with barbecue and live band. Details: fly-rotax.com.

Visicover is a unique service that lets you buy and manage your fixed or flexing microlight insurance online whenever it suits you.

International events


21-23 Aug: AUSTRIA. Rotax Fly-in. Demonstration flights at Wels airport with the 9125 and 9155 engines, company tour of state-of-the-art BRP-Rotax factory in Guns kirchen, visit to a new centenary exhibition, simulations, Q&A sessions and evening’s entertainment with barbecue and live band. Details: fly-rotax.com.

Visicover is a unique service that lets you buy and manage your fixed or flexing microlight insurance online whenever it suits you.
Nicer on top, by Aaron Mercer

Aaron departing from Membury airfield in the C42 on the way to Blackbushe. “I escaped up on top to avoid all the local fog patches,” he said. As always in the MF health and safety department, we checked with him that he was clear of the white bits and in view of the green bits.

Peak time, by Amanda Williams

Amanda and husband Chris over the Welsh mountains on their way from Swansea to Caernarfon in their C42