

microlight

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FLYING

inside

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Small plane, big ambition

Secondhand secrets:
Quantum 503

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Liviering on the edge

AN *Irish Times* reader recently wrote to that august publication in despair, saying: "For God's sake reopen the pubs before we all become alcoholics!"

He's not alone: I read a while back that booze sales had gone up 294% in the lockdown, and *Sunday Times* columnist Rod Liddle wrote a few weeks ago that when he ordered 18 bottles of wine online, the nice woman from Majestic phoned up to see if it was a mistake, since he'd placed the same order five days earlier.

"Well, there are two of us, you know," he said plaintively.

I know how he feels. Obviously I never drink and fly, since you only spill it, but with no flying, not to mention motorcycling, tennis and coaching volleyball, I find that I'm tucking into so much vino collapse of an evening that I quite often find myself skipping around the garden at midnight singing old Swedish folk songs while wearing nothing but a woolly hat.

My only excuse is that if 60% alcohol kills Coronavirus, by my maths that equals five glasses at 12%.

Still, when this is over, not only will I give my liver early release from hard labour, but I'll be taking up all those long-standing flying invitations I've always put on hold because I've been too busy writing books, and other feeble excuses.

So on the list is a potter up the Scottish coast to Glenforsa, followed by a whizz over to see Gordon and Jill Douglas at East Fortune.

Then a weekend at Eshott to catch up with *MF* reporter Paul Kiddell.

After that, it'll be off to Rossall Field, where CFI James Walker was the perfect host when Joe McCarrison and I called in for an overnight stay while ferrying a Thruster back to Newtownards last year.

This time I'll actually get to meet Danny Roach, who's written some lovely pieces for *MF*, and who we missed last time because of the feeble excuse that he was getting married.

And if we think we've got problems not flying for fun, spare a thought for not only our own instructors who have lost their income during lockdown, but also for the thousands of commercial pilots who are going to lose their jobs.

As for us, we've hopefully got the open-to-all Freedom Rally and a post-pandemic pop-up Popham to look forward to, so see you there. Cheers!

Geoff Hill
ghillster@gmail.com

Heading home, by Julian Floyd
"Good memories of returning to Sywell just before sunset on a beautiful summer evening – flexwing flying at its best!" said Julian

PHOTO COMP 04



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COVER: "After four weeks of glorious flying weather and not a prop turned, I've found this pic to remind us what it's like," said Frank Smith. "This is over Bowness on Windermere in September 2018 in the Flash 2 Alpha out of St Michael's."



PHOTO COMPETITION

THIS MONTH'S WINNERS

- First Balázs Michnay, "Beach patrol" (main photo, above right)
- Second Frank Smith, "Windermere" (cover)
- Third Julian Floyd "Heading home" (page 3)
- Fourth Ethan Sherry, "Sunrise" (immediate right)
- Fifth = Steve Grimshaw, "Last flight of freedom" (above)
- Fifth = Harry Davis, "Balloon Buster" (far right)

GREAT images from the glory days before lockdown are still flocking in faster than seagulls at the rustle of a bag of chips being opened. Keep them coming until our memories become our futures and we take to the air as if we've never been away. After this we'll all appreciate all the things we previously took for granted, not just flugelling.

Balázs Michnay is our clear winner with this fabulous shot taken on a low pass along a deserted Norfolk beach with passenger Pawel Walczewski. It's a shame we don't have space to run the whole postbag here, but you can see the full entry online at microlightflying.org.uk/gallery. Well worth a peek.



The sun rises again on flying days (photo: Paul Kiddell)

CORONACRISIS LATEST

We're free (a bit)

DfT allows flying again – but only in England and Northern Ireland

FIRST the good news: the Department for Transport allowed recreational flying again in England from 15 May, and in Northern Ireland it will be permitted from 19 May.

Now the bad news: it didn't apply to Scotland or Wales as we went to press, and with social distancing still in place, in England it means flying solo or with a household member, which rules out most instruction, while in Northern Ireland only solo flights are allowed.

You can read the full DfT statement in the News section of bmaa.org.

"It is vital that the conditions are adhered to if pilots are to minimise any risk of cross-infection. Please read the

statement carefully and plan to protect others as well as yourselves," said BMAA CE Geoff Weighell.

"When you return to flying, for many pilots it will have been some weeks since they last flew due to the Covid-19 lockdown. For some it may even have been months due to the poor weather that we experienced from September to March.

"We understand that pilots will be keen to get back to flying as soon as possible, but urge a degree of caution before that first flight. The following guide gives some food for thought to prepare yourself for that very important first flight."

Mindset

Recognise that however keen you are to fly and however experienced you might be, any lay-off will have caused a reduction in your pilot skills.

These will be both handling skills and thought processes. What might have been a simple task when fully current can become an overwhelming problem when out of practice.

Recognising your own potential shortfalls is the first step to avoiding becoming out of your depth in flight.

Planning

The more difficult the flight that you plan, the more likely you are to reach a state of overload before you rebuild your skill levels to what they were.

Start with a simple flight with limited opportunity for error. For example, plan to fly a session of circuits in good weather and on your own, unless you feel that it is wiser to take an instructor if this can be done safely with respect to virus contamination.

When you get back into practice, you can start making the flight more complex. Leave the long flights with multiple altimeter and radio frequency changes and an interested passenger until you are totally confident again.

Paperwork

Before going flying, make sure that your personal paperwork is up to date. Check your licence, medical and insurance. Remember that when you do start to take passengers again you must have flown

three takeoffs and landings within the preceding 90 days. Just as important as your personal paperwork is that of the aircraft. Check that the permit to fly has a current certificate of validity and that any maintenance required is up to date.

Health

As always it is vital to ensure that you are healthy enough to operate the aircraft. The pneumonic IMSAFE(E) is a useful checklist that you can use before each flight, namely Illness, Medication, Stress, Alcohol, Fatigue, Emotion and Eating.

The aircraft

As well as your layoff from flying, the aircraft itself may have been sitting unused for some time. It is even more important

than ever that thorough preflight preparation is carried out before attempting to fly.

Fuel quality doesn't last forever. You may be wise to drain out any fuel that has lain in the tanks for a month or more.

Make sure that none of the rubber parts show any signs of cracking. You will need to rotate the tyres to look for damage when they might have sat in the same place for a while, and to make sure that the brakes are operating. Check thoroughly that there are no nests or chewed wiring. Make sure that vents are clear and, where one fitted to an instrument, that the instrument is working too.

Passengers

Even with the relaxed rules around Covid-19 lockdown, there are still rules relating to social distancing.

In a microlight it is impossible to stay 2m from a passenger, so we advise extreme caution if taking anyone with you.

Common sense must apply, and if there is any chance that there might be a contamination between pilot and passenger, the flight should not take place. The rules allow close contact between members of the same family living in the same household; under that circumstance passenger carrying in a microlight will be as safe as any other contact between those two people.

If an aircraft is shared, due consideration must be given to disinfecting the aircraft between different pilots.

All surfaces must be cleaned with substances that will kill any virus on them.

Airfields and airspace

During the lockdown many airfields have closed as staff have been furloughed. This means that airfield maintenance may not have continued as normal.

Even if you fly from your own grass strip, make sure that the condition of the strip is good before you attempt to fly. Is there a rabbit hole that wasn't there before? Walk the strip to find out.

Many Air Traffic Service units have also furloughed staff and are operating on a very limited capacity. Your flight planning must be flexible so that you don't rely upon assistance or clearances that may not be available due to low staffing levels.

Other guidance

Best guidance comes from Government as published on the [.gov](http://gov.uk) website and television.

Other guidance will be published by the CAA and the Department for Transport in due course and we will forward the links.

Also, GASCo has published an online briefing which is a very helpful prompt ahead of a return to flying. It's at gasco.org.uk/returntoflighting.html.

Dan's the Man

SANDOWN owner Danial Subhani was well ahead of all other airfields when the lockdown was lifted, says MF reporter Merv Middleton, who flew there the weekend after flying restarted.



Boris Johnson, pictured here after his first flight in a flexwing, moments after the skies were opened up to us again. Conditionally, at any rate

"He'd worked with the council for quarantine and hygiene compliance, cashless payments, one-way movement, tables 5m apart, the café doing takeaways and online booking, payment and food ordering," said Merv.

"I reckon he was the busiest airfield in the UK, and probably Europe! Flight Radar showed the vast majority of aircraft in the air were heading his way."

• Full details of the BMAA advice on a return to flying are at bmaa.org. Go to the Information Library tab, then News. The CAA statement is on bmaa.org/files/Covid_Guidance_GA_Recreational_Flying_15_May_2020.pdf.

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Chiltern Park facing shutdown after 32 years

THE owner of Chiltern Park Aerodrome has given notice to Dennis and Julie Pearson, who've run the Oxfordshire airfield for over three decades, to leave by the end of September.

They plan to appeal the decision, and if that fails are looking for an alternative site.

"It was with surprise, shock and much



sadness that we were told we have to close the airfield and leave by 24 September," said Dennis.

"It will take about three to six months for the appeal to be processed from the end of September, and if it goes against us, we would have a further period of three months and 21 days to vacate, so at worst, sometime around July next year.

"However, if we win, the court has the power to grant a new lease of up to 15 years. There is, however, a caveat: we will only appeal if that is what everyone wants, as we will need everyone's support and help to see this through, and perhaps some fundraising also, since I have personally spent a fair portion of the kids' inheritance so far on legal fees.

"As a backstop, I have been investigating alternative sites, all within a few miles of Chiltern Park, but first I would like to channel all our efforts into saving the airfield.

"It all started 33 years ago when I stumbled upon microlight flying. I was bitten by the bug, and didn't want to travel one

and a half hours all the way to Andover for lessons, especially when my instructor only lived in Reading.

"After finally convincing my then landlord David Hildred I was quite sane, in 1988 he leased us what is now known as Chiltern Park Aerodrome. In 1990 the flying school was set up, and still operates to this day.

"In 2005 we became one of the first recreational flying clubs to achieve Community Amateur Sports Club status, which enabled us to create additional activities focused more towards charity. This has now blossomed to over 190 charities.

"We have taught countless local people to become pilots, freefall skydivers or just wingwalkers for charity.

"As an offshoot, we have hopefully given many hours of free entertainment to locals and passers-by who drop in for a cuppa at Julie's Cloud Dine café.

"As a direct result of all this activity, we have generated regular business for local hotels, pubs, taxis and shops. We try wherever possible to employ local students to help run the circus.

"We have given freely many hours of flight training time to young local students who have gone on to be airline or military pilots, and our local Cubs and Scouts regularly visit to complete their aviation badges.

"We've 32 members of staff, and to date have had 6952 skydives and raised £1.5M for charities, with a 100% safety record and 5000-8000 visitors per year.

"We're an auxiliary night training ground for the police helicopter unit at Benson, a night training ground for the Thames Valley Air Ambulance, an emergency landing and training ground for RAF Benson's 33 Sqn Puma and 230 Sqn Chinook helicopter force and an emergency landing and training ground for the RAF Benson Flying Club and BGA gliders.

"Our hangar building is held in reserve for the Oxfordshire Fire Brigade in case Goring Fire Station has to redeploy in the event of a national emergency – quite poignant in the current crisis.

"As far as we can assess, Chiltern Park is the only site of its kind in the south of England conducting all of these activities

Above Chiltern Park from 5000ft; and (left) Dennis and Julie Pearson, fighting to save the aerodrome (photos: Merv Middleton)

in one place; not a bad effort from just a few dedicated souls and 25 acres of South Oxfordshire grass.

"Julie and I would like to thank everyone for your past support, help and encouragement over the years.

"If anyone would like to help us to continue here or elsewhere in South Oxfordshire, or if you know someone who can help, please email us at chilternairsports@gmail.com."

Rob and Ed elected

BMAA Chairman Rob Hughes has been re-elected to the council, with 388 votes.

Ed McCallum took the second seat up for grabs, with 280, with Doug Coppin getting 187 and missing out this time.

AGM proposals accepted were to accept the accounts for the financial year 2018-19 (for 428, against eight, abstained 15), to reappoint the auditors, Ellacotts of Banbury, for the financial year 2019-20 (for 429, against six, abstained 16), and to increase the membership fees by £2 (for 362, against 83, abstained six).

The Moor the merrier

AS if Ed McCallum wasn't busy enough, he's put a new runway in at his Attheyes Moor airfield in Northumberland.

"It's direction 32/14 at 600m long and 15m wide. There's an option to extend this by a further 70m on the southern end but this will come later in the year," said Doug Coppin.

"He's also smoothed out the small bumps on 26/08 at 660x15m and 21/03 at 510x15m, so after we are free to fly nobody can blame the bumps in the runway if you have a shocker of a landing – and I'm the first to admit, I've done loads!

"James Horn at East Durham Microlights (EDM) hasn't been idle either, with the new hard standing and drainage going in outside the new hangar. The grass has now grown through the matting he put down on the taxiway and you won't believe the difference.

"All the earth that came from EDM's new clubhouse and hangar has been spread over the field to improve drainage and will be seeded by the time members read this.

"James has also extended runway 27/09 by a further 120m. This is now 660x25m. Eddie and James between them have moved over 7000 tonnes of



Digger wars – James Horn of East Durham Microlights extending the runway at Greenhills Farm airfield

earth, although the jury is out on who's got the best digger. Excellent work, gentlemen."

Flyer goes digital

FLYER, possibly the UK's second best flying magazine, is going digital – and free.

Edited by that very nice chap Ed Hicks, it not only has full-fat flugelling, but our man Paul Kiddell as a fifth columnist regularly spreading the word about microlighting, with features about touring by Eurostar, backed up by his stunning photos.

The new digital version is available from the July issue, and you can register at flyer.co.uk or <https://mailchi.mp/flyer/free>.

"So why have we done this? The Covid-19 lockdown has meant that significantly fewer shops are open, and those that are open are seeing significantly lower footfall," said Ed.

"Airports and other travel hubs are either closed or nearly empty of people, and that's where *Flyer* – and many other magazines – sell many copies.

"This means all magazine and newspaper publishers are faced with the prospect of printing thousands of copies and seeing them end up being pulped as waste. That's not good for anybody.

"To counter this problem, and to provide you with a better, deeper and more engaging experience, we have decided to go digital. It's been something we've been thinking about for some time and we've accelerated the process."

Flyer is also launching a paid-for Flyer Club, which gives you a free digital copy of Harrier pilot John Farley's book, *A View from the Hover*, free landing fees, weather briefings from Dr Simon Keeling, additional material from the *Flyer* team, virtual monthly meetings with the team and

guests, invitations to real meet-ups when we're all flying again, and exclusive discounts.

It's £30 a year, which can be paid in one go, or as £7.50 per quarter.

If you have a current subscription, membership of the club is automatic, and no action is required.

It all sounds splendid, and we at *MF* Global HQ wish Ed & Co good luck. In fact, the only downside is that *Flyer's* long-serving reporter, Ann O'Logue, has now been made redundant.

Solent danger area

A DRONE will be operating out of Le-on-Solent aerodrome up to 31 July to trial deliveries of medical supplies to the Isle of Wight for the purposes of a Government Coronavirus response plan.

"As it will be operating beyond visual line of sight and has no detect-and-avoid capability, a Temporary Danger Area has

Osh koshed

THE 68th annual Experimental Aircraft Association AirVenture fly-in, known to its many friends as Oshkosh, has been cancelled due to Coronavirus.

It was scheduled to take place on 20-26 July at Wittman Regional Airport in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, but as we went to press, Wisconsin was under a stay-at-home order until 26 May, and preparations for the show had been due to start on 1 May.

Oshkosh 2021 will be held from 26 July to 1 August.

▷ been established between Lee-on-Solent and Binstead aerodromes,” said the CAA.

“Within the TDA, a danger area activity information service will be available from Lee-on-Solent Aerodrome on Lee Information, 118.925MHz.”

Ferry crossings to the Isle of Wight are currently reduced because of the crisis.

Let us fly!

AIRFIELDS should be opened again as soon as possible, says IAOPA Europe’s Chairman Michael Erb

“If a general curfew is imposed in the days of Covid-19, then we should not fly; there is nothing to discuss,” he said from Germany, which along with France had banned GA activity during the lockdown.

“But if it is considered harmless to drive and go for a walk in spite of Covid-19... why shouldn’t we also go up in the air with a small plane, accompanied by our family members?”

“From the perspective of virus containment, this should be completely harmless. Unfortunately, this is often not seen this way by the authorities.

“We are not ignorant; of course we are fully aware that the whole world suffers from Covid-19, there is no business as usual for us, and no one wants to take pleasure flights to great destinations and afterwards upload colourful pictures on social media to celebrate it publicly.

“But why shouldn’t we try to keep as much as possible of normal procedures in general aviation in these difficult times?”

“What are the advantages of a brief flight? An hour’s flight protects the engine from impending corrosion, it allows pilots to maintain their safety standards, it helps small charter companies survive, and it’s just good for our morale.

“Therefore let’s get rid of the flight restrictions wherever possible, and general-aviation pilots will handle these freedoms responsibly.”

But then again...

NOT everyone across the pond is injecting themselves with disinfectant on the advice of Dr Trump. They’re also having thoughts about how dangerous it is not to fly for ages during the lockdown, then

take to the skies again in Kierkegaardian fear and trembling.

AOPA President Mark Baker said there was confusion about whether it’s legal or appropriate to fly during state-mandated stay-at-home guidance.

“It’s very different by state. Most states are recognizing that flight training for proficiency and safety is still important,” he said. “Commercial flight training has largely shut down around the country, but proficiency training can continue.”

Airspace: have your say

THE CAA has further extended the deadline of its consultation on the criteria that it will use to determine whether to accept the Airspace Change Masterplan.

“This will continue to allow stakeholders a greater opportunity to input into the engagement exercise despite the disruption caused by Coronavirus,” said a spokesman.

The exercise will now close on 26 June at consultations.caa.co.uk. □



Buy now while stocks last!

DEAR EDITOR

I’m putting forward a proposal to make the BMAA some extra funds for when we start flying again.

Once the restrictions are lifted, I’m sure there will be a lot of pent-up enthusiasm for flying, but in the meantime, have you seen that world oil prices have gone negative? What that means is there is a very reduced worldwide demand, but production is still taking place, resulting in a massive oversupply. That oil has got to be stored somewhere, and the cost of hiring tankers, ships and storage depots is very high, plus they are reaching full capacity. So they have got to get rid of surplus oil, and it’s cheaper to pay people to take the oil than it is to pay for storage.

Now here’s my cunning plan: I think we should invest BMAA funds in oil! In fact, we can be *paid* to take the oil! All we need is to put it somewhere. So fill up the mowers, fill up all the planes, all our jerrycans and your Old Sparrowfart beer jugs, then go out and buy storage tanks, bowsers and a few thousand plastic bottles. It all could be stored where nobody would notice – in the empty BMAA offices. Simple!

Then we could flog it to members once the crisis is over. The council members and I could be rich for life! All those in favour...

Paul Brooker

(Currently in self-isolation in a nice secure home, being cared for by very kind people with lovely white coats)

Paul, brilliant. The Daily Telegraph got a letter recently saying: “Sir, last night some villain sneaked up to my car and siphoned fuel into the tank.” – Ed.

Paul Brooker standing by in case anyone tries to pinch his oil (above); and the Kent Microlight Aircraft Club has already started stockpiling jerrycans to corner the global oil market. The bomb is in case anyone tries to nick them (below)



The importance of saluting Ernest

DEAR EDITOR

Despite the cancellation of microlight inspector Ernest Horsfall’s 102nd birthday fly-in, he still managed to celebrate in some style on 21 April.

And yes, he’s still an active microlight and light aircraft inspector, and a recognised and still in much demand expert on wooden aircraft construction.

Observing all the Coronavirus separation criteria, Ernest spent much of his birthday giving press interviews, but he still found time to chat to friends on the phone and occasionally from his garden. He even managed a relaxing glass of wine or two with a slice of birthday cake, kindly provided by his former employer, Vauxhall.

Ernest thanks all those who sent him gifts, cards and best wishes, and said: “It almost makes getting to be 102 a pleasure – but only almost.”

He was especially pleased to receive so many greetings from microlight pilots, ▷



A bottle of champagne, a letter from Boris and a cake – what more could microlight inspector Ernest Horsfall want for his 102nd birthday?



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Pete Cheney's lovingly restored MW5 – complete with pod made from a jet drop tank

It's now registered as an SDR, and I managed a few short flights last year. I'm looking forward to more airtime this year, fingers crossed.

Some may notice the unusual pod; it is in fact a drop tank from a jet which apparently was sourced from a scrapyard by the original builder, Ian Croft.

The MWs are incredibly well engineered, and a testament to their designer, so a big thank you to Mike for the design and never once complaining about my many phone calls for advice over the years.

Pete Cheney

Steve Slade adds: Pete's line about the drop tank reminds me that Kim Willcox added fuel tanks to his MW7 that looked just like bombs.

Field fever

DEAR EDITOR

Geoff Hall was quite right on p16 of the last MF – another great read, by the way – when he said there was a poem about *The Lonely Q and the Sky*.

Apologies to John Masefield and any of his adoring fans, but I'm sure they'll forgive me for my slightly modified version below, or put it down to my having gone lockdown loco.

Field Fever

With apologies to John Masefield

I must go down to the field again, to the lonely field and the sky, And all I ask is a whirling prop, and a map to steer her by.

And the starter's kick and the brace-wire's song, and the windsock barely shaking, And a golden sun upon in the sky, and a bright blue dawn a-breaking.

I must go down to the field again, for though Bernoulli may have died

His is a loud call, a clear call and may not be denied;

And all I ask is a windless day, with few white clouds drifting by,

The sound of the motor, the air on my face, and the buzzard's mewing cry.

I must go down to the field again, away from all this strife,

Where PPE and social distance are part of a flier's life

Oh, how I long for a merry yarn, and a burger when I'm done,

A quiet sleep and a sweet dream, when this blessed lockdown's gone.

Kind regards and stay healthy

Terry Cook

Terry, genius! – Ed.



(Left) Bernie Clifton aloft in his Eagle, aka the Flying Ostrich, in 1983, as captured by the *Daily Mirror*; and (right) Bernie's copy of MF drying out after his security staff took anti-Coronavirus measures a step too far



Colourful days ahead

DEAR EDITOR

As readers may remember, last summer I became the UK's youngest solo pilot on my 16th birthday after training with Martin Conway at Carrickmore and Kernan in Northern Ireland.

The plan then was to pass my GST on my 17th birthday in June 2020, then go to the Atlantic Flight Training Academy in Cork and train to become a commercial airline pilot – my ultimate goal and absolute passion.

To prepare for that, I paid a visit to the local optician, but was only able to read two out of 12 of the Ishihara Colourvision charts, which the optician told me may cause a problem for me wanting to be a commercial pilot.

I phoned Dr Adrian Chorley of Aviation Vision Services at Heathrow and booked myself in to do a CAD test, currently the

only one the CAA will accept for colour vision standards.

Unfortunately, when I did the test, I was told my red green colourblindness was too severe to pass for a non-restricted class one medical.

At that point I felt both happy and disappointed: happy because I now knew for sure, and disappointed because for about 13 years I'd wanted to be a commercial pilot.

Now I look at it as not a career-stopper, but a simple bit of turbulence on my journey to hopeful success in the aviation industry.

So where do I go from here? I hope to get my NPPL on my 17th birthday in June if the current pandemic allows, then get a Group A PPL and my instructor rating. Then I have a few plans in mind for starting my own business.

For anyone who may be reading this and thinking they might be colourblind

but aren't sure, I would definitely recommend doing the CAD test so that you know the severity of your colourblindness and whether it will stop you from becoming a commercial pilot or not.

And if you do fail, it's not the end of the road, so remain positive, always follow your dreams and never give up.

Ethan Sherry

MF "almost as infectious as Bernie's pants": official

DEAR EDITOR

It's lonely here in North Derbyshire, so I'm sending you some photos of my long Johns. They're the type without the quick release cat flap (a much vaunted facility that frankly didn't work for me when I needed it most), but I'd rather not revisit that occasion. ▶

▶ and hopes they'll be able to join him at his 103rd birthday fly-in next year.

On the day, he received three special gifts:

- 1 A letter of congratulations from PM Boris Johnson.
- 2 A Spitfire print signed by all pilots and personnel of the RAF's Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. Ernest came home after the war in a Lancaster, but always wanted to be a Spitfire pilot.
- 3 A bottle of champagne from P&O cruises. Ernest had travelled to North Africa in 1941 on a P&O liner, and offered to repair it when it broke down.

Ernest has some 3000 flying hours as P1, but insurers will no longer provide cover for him as P1, so while he still flies occasionally, it's with other pilots.

When asked by a journalist the secret of his long life, he replied: "A girlfriend who is 40 years younger than me."

It all just goes to show that there may be no old and bold pilots, but Ernest is certainly one old and bold ex-pilot!

Cheers,

Terry Cook

Five alive

DEAR EDITOR

Following on from Steve Slade's letter last month and the splendid photo of four models from Mike Whittaker's stable, I built an MW5 back in the 1980s which had to be sold on when I bought an X-air kit.

I always regretted parting with it, so several years ago I purchased G-MWIC, the MW5 in Steve's photo, as a bit of a basket case, with no engine, few instruments and several litres of water in the leading edge of one wing!

It was not too far gone, however, and so with the help of my old flying mate Martin Reed I set about a refurb.

This took somewhat longer than I expected, but we both really enjoyed seeing it rise from the ashes – and the smell of dope.

The wing was repaired and flying surfaces re-covered, and a new engine and prop were followed by instruments, panel and screen.

It's not quite as pristine as when it won the best part-built aircraft at a show back in the early Nineties, but it's fairly tidy.



Ethan Sherry with proud instructor Martin Conway – and appropriate T-shirt – after going solo on his 16th birthday



Pride of the album

DEAR EDITOR

Here's a photo taken by my 15-year-old daughter Erin on our first ever flight together over our house – a moment I looked forward to greatly, and a photo that I will cherish forever.

The village in the photo is Buriton, tucked against the South Down Way in Hampshire and our home for over 20 years.

Flying was, and still is, an otherworldly thing that I'd watch impressive people do from my place on the ground with regular folk.

I come from pretty humble beginnings, and there's a massive gap around Hampshire as far as flexwing schooling is concerned, so getting my NPPL took a huge effort, trekking back and forth to Wiltshire for lessons. Getting my licence made for a huge milestone in my life, and now I have my own Quik hangared 20 minutes from home.

Thanks to my wife Andrea, Julian James and Tony Hughes at Yatesbury for getting me there and my fearless daughter for the photo. To all those bored of circuit bashing or tempted to take that first lesson... get it done! You won't regret it.

Regards,

Paul Turrell

Bernie, brilliant. That'll keep the lunacy level at MF at maximum, just where we like it.

Stay safe and sane. Actually, on second thoughts, forget the second one. It's obviously too late – Ed.

Basic is best

DEAR EDITOR

Last month's magazine was excellent! Meteorology! Corrosion! Safety! – and finally, advice to look out of the cockpit by Derek Lamb.

These are the very class of article we all need more of, although on the front cover, I see bolts protruding into the cockpit. They need cutting off and filing smooth asap.

As I've said before, the world records, the super "how I dunnits" are entertaining and the achievements commendable, but we seem to get them every month.

Back to basics: we all need it. Theory of flight? Engine strip and rebuild? Circuit procedures for big airfields and little? Cautionary tales? We need lots of them to learn from others' mistakes, and, as an old hang gliding acquaintance said to me: "Fly every day you possibly can. On every single flight you learn something, and practice makes perfect."

Happy landings, Pete Eichhorn

Pete, many thanks. We do have Techtalk and Safety sections every month, including Did I tell you about the time? *cautionary tales* in which pilots write about incidents others can learn from. Circuit procedures are covered in our Airfield of the Month features, although all of the above have been curtailed by the fact that all but two BMAA staff are on furlough, and I've been asked to freeze MF's editorial budget during lockdown. However, our reporters Paul, Merv and Steve have very generously offered to write for nothing if needed.

Thankfully, readers have responded so well to my Facebook appeals for content that we've some great stories lined up for the next few months, as you'll see – Ed.

Five years of fun

DEAR EDITOR

My addiction with paramotoring started just five years ago. I grew up flying tandem with my dad Pete in microlights before he bought his first paramotor in the Nineties.

Back then, the motors were really heavy, the wings difficult to launch and there were no schools to learn from. It always looked quite hard to learn, but he

always went flying with his friends and had great stories to tell.

In 2015, he introduced me to a local school and I flew tandem with the instructor. It was a beautiful evening with no wind and a great sunset, and while I was slightly nervous for the launch, it was incredible to fly next to my dad and witness the scenery from the air.

From then on I had completely caught the flying bug. I signed up for lessons the following month and worked longer hours so that I could afford my own wing and motor.

After a year of ground handling, I had the confidence to take my first flight, and it was everything I had imagined it to be and more. The feeling of sitting in your sky armchair, floating in the sky and taking in the stunning scenery, was something you can't really put into words.

Five years later, the opportunities I've had and the people I have met with a shared interest have been incredible, from landing at Sywell Aerodrome with my dad to sharing the sky with balloons and flying over a vintage train crossing a viaduct.

Sunset flights are still my favourite; there is something about flying that makes you feel so grateful after every flight and a good flight can keep me smiling for weeks.

A big thank you to my dad for introducing me to flying and to Clive Mason from CM Paramotors for teaching me how to fly.

Dad flies a trike with a paramotor wing now, but I managed to find a pic of the first microlight he purchased in 1986.

For 10 years, he held fly-ins for charity every New Year's Day which a lot of the Flylight guys from Sywell used to attend. It was absolutely freezing, but great fun.

Tracey Johnson

In search of the Grass route

DEAR EDITOR

I love the BMAA, your editorials and your last book, *This Way Up* – almost a follow-on from *Propellerhead*.

A couple of years ago I bought a Thruster T300 from Richard Skelton at Carrickmore and am very happy flying it from my 300m strip. ▷

Right, from top Tracey Johnson enjoying the magic of flight; Tracey's dad Pete with his first microlight in 1986; and ready to rock and roll...



▷ On the clothes line is the first time they've been airborne this year, but beside them you'll see a more familiar item which will be of more interest to your discerning readers (one hopes).

Yes, it's May MF. You see, apparently it won't withstand the quarantine methods employed here at the funny farm, since I'm 84 and need to be careful. All incoming items are hosed down with a mixture of Dettol, TCP and the residue of some liquid my Granddad used to gargle with to cure his halitosis.

Unfortunately my security team went at this suspicious parcel with unnecessary force, resulting in emergency action being taken.

The tumble dryer was ruled out, which is why the mag spent a few hours wafting in the gentle breeze (that same gentle breeze which is perfect for flying).

All's well now, and although slightly crumpled and frayed around the edges (but enough about me), this edition is once again a delightful read.

Onwards, and if not upwards, sideways till the world changes,

Yours,

Bernie Clifton

PS: In 1983 I had the audacity to invite the *Daily Mirror* to capture me aloft in my Eagle flying machine, which I'd wittily named the Flying Ostrich. (I told you I was lonely.) Photo enclosed.

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"A one-stop shop, we offer the lot"



Chris Bradford in one of the UK's two Dream Classics. George Moore is planning to make it three

▷ I fancy building a Dream Classic kit from Airdrome in Missouri and putting a Rotax 503 in it, so it's grey-matter time.

Do readers know of any in the UK, have any comments about it or can advise me of the best way to describe the kit of parts? Also, what import number I should use to find out if there is any duty or VAT to pay?

Kind regards,

George Moore

As readers may know, the gorgeous Dream Classic is based on the 1908 Santos-Dumont Demoiselle and imported by Grass Strip Aviation Ltd (GSAL), which also imports Airdrome Aeroplane's other brilliant First World War replicas such as the Fokker Triplane and the Sopwith Camel (airdromeaeroplanes.com).

I passed George on to GSAL's George Simoni, who said: "There are currently two Dream Classic aircraft completed in the UK, one which GSAL supplied and another imported before we started the company."

George M then phoned George S, and reported back: "George very kindly informed me of all the procedures to import, documentation, tariffs and duty etc."

He also explained how buying it from GSAL differed from buying it direct from Airdrome. GSA cuts and bends to build profile all the tubes and includes all other items required, as well as providing technical backup, assistance in test flying and follow-up maintenance."

Another problem solved. I do like happy endings.

George, good luck, and keep us posted, especially if we can do a flight test for MF when it's finished – Ed.

Spark of genius

DEAR EDITOR

Ignitec may not be a familiar name, but it manufactures ignition modules for motorbikes – and Rotax 912 engines.

In 2019 I bought a 912-engined Skyranger which had one Rotax and one Ignitec SMD fitted, ie one module of each make powered each of the dual ignition systems. SMD modules are the electronic "brain" of the ignition system: basically they send an electronic pulse to the high-tension coils which causes them to power the spark plugs.

Completing the BMAA modification for that installation, with my inspector hat on, gave me a chance to evaluate how the different SMD modules operated, and there was no discernible difference between them.

Having both SMDs the same, however, seemed intuitively better, so I applied for a BMAA mod for a second Ignitec module, and after having the installation checked by another BMAA inspector (thanks, Glynn), I went through the required test flight sched-

ule required to prove reliability with two units fitted. The units are now approved by a BMAA MAAN on my aircraft, which will make it easy for anyone else wanting to fit them.

Like most electronic gizmos, the Ignitec SMD modules come in black plastic boxes but they are not bolt-compatible with the Rotax SMDs, which sit on top of the engine. This is actually an advantage: on my Skyranger they are mounted on the cockpit side of the firewall, so that they are away from engine heat and vibration, and moving electronic units away from hot vibrating places must help reliability. On a trike they could be mounted to the engine frame or monopole.

Another difference is that they can have a 12V DC supply as well as the AC supply from the engine alternator. This has two benefits. It is claimed to give a better spark on initial start up, and if the AC side fails the units will continue to run from the battery. Certainly I now get a clean start.

There are various different versions of Rotax SMDs with different plug configurations, and the Ignitec modules can be supplied with suitable wires and plugs to fit.

I was so impressed with the Ignitecs that I am now importing them, and the icing on the cake is that they retail at £300 per pair plus carriage.

Andy Buchan
Light Flight, Westonzoyland airfield

Strubby sentiment

DEAR EDITOR

Just to say thank you to Paul Kiddell, and yourself of course, for publishing Paul's article *Long to rain over us* in April MF. Seeing the pictures of former RAF Strubby, although hardly recognisable nowadays from when I was stationed there, brought back wonderful memories.

Being a young single lad posted to the fleshpots of Lincolnshire, it was a great time, even if we did have terrible weather to contend with.

Regards, Dave Bayliss

Kiss goodbye to the Q

DEAR EDITOR

I think my SSDR Pegasus Q has finally come to the end of its adventurous life after 31 years.

Before the lockdown, I was doing a wing inspection and noticed the stitching has deteriorated in one part of the leading

edge, and I don't think it would be economically viable to repair.

I paid £2500 for it in 2009, so it doesn't owe me anything, and I'll sell it for spares or repair.

Since the New Year, I'd been having thoughts of a change of aircraft, so this was nature's way of making this decision for me, and I'm buying into a syndicate which owns an Air Création Kiss at Palmer Moor. It will nice to be able to carry passengers again.

Stay safe, and tally ho,

Phil Strangward

Radio ripostes

DEAR EDITOR

I rushed to open May MF not long after looking in on a webinar entitled *LLR & Class D VMC Minima exemption*, kindly run by Kevin Edmunds, who is a Manchester controller and RT examiner, explaining the revised regulations regarding the Manchester Low Level Route (LLR).

I noticed the article *Manchester LLC loosens up*, but one of the points Kevin had just emphasised was that it's called the LLR (Low Level Route) not LLC (Low Level Corridor).

He also took the opportunity to reiterate another *bête noire* which he emphasises on his radio courses: that when in the circuit and having turned from base leg to land, the radio call is "G-ABCD final runway 29", not "finals", as it's short for final approach.

I'm not usually pedantic, but thought you might be short of copy!

Kind regards John Lorains

John, I sit corrected. A quick emergency appointment with Dr Google reveals that it is more often referred to as route rather than corridor.

I'm with you on final. As we all know, finals are university exams – Ed.

Vapour wail

DEAR EDITOR

I was outraged to see this flying overhead today (*see centre right – Ed*), but it's OK: I checked the registration, and it's not a microlight.

Geoff Hall
aka Outraged of Pepham

PPE for a 503

DEAR EDITOR

Here's a shot (*see right – Ed*) of my first flight after the lockdown was lifted.

Bob Pattenden



Ignitec SMD module. Andy Buchan was so impressed he's now importing them



Definitely not a Thruster, says Geoff Hall, aka Outraged of Pepham



We don't actually know what engine Bob's trike has, but 503's the only one that rhymes...



The joy of sims

We may all be having fun on flight sims during lockdown, but they can also help with training, says **Lawrence Bell**



You must use proper controllers. It's simply not realistic to just use your mouse to fly the simulator

Above
Microsoft is developing new flight sim software after a break of 15 years

Facing page
The view from Airborne Aviation's C42 virtual cockpit

MANY students consider flight simulators to aid training, especially during periods of prolonged bad weather, or when they are struggling to master a certain aspect such as landing.

Let's face it, flying lessons are expensive, so student pilots will naturally explore all options, and most will ask their instructor about simulators at some point.

Sims, of course, range from apps on your smartphone to full-motion Airbus flight decks costing millions of pounds.

Those expensive simulators are extremely realistic, and newly qualified commercial pilots will spend the majority of their time in the simulator while training for a type rating.

It's my opinion that an app on your phone is going to be of little use to any student pilot, though desktop simulators are of some use.

Software packages such as X-Plane or Prepar3d have sophisticated weather and aerodynamic engines, and when you add third-party aircraft models and scenery, it can make for a realistic environment.

For example, Sim720, a software development company, designed a realistic model of the Ikarus C42 for Prepar3d that was so good it was approved by Comco-Ikarus.

Another developer, Just Flight, has created many highly accurate models of popular light aircraft such as the PA28 Warrior, which is commonly used for training. The models include fully simulated fuel

systems and even nuances such as vapour lock and spark-plug fouling.

Other developers have created realistic simulations of airliners, with complex system modellings, payload management and failure simulations.

To add to the realism, numerous companies develop scenery to bring the world to life. Orbx has developed photo-realistic scenery for the whole of the UK, with all masts, obstructions and aerodromes included. You can even fly over your own house.

You can add to the realism by connecting to networks such as Vatsim, which allows you to experience air traffic control from real people who volunteer to play the role of controller. They even have to sit tests and earn virtual qualifications to do so.

These advancements are made possible by a large and established community of hobbyists that support the developers.

Last year, Microsoft announced that after a hiatus of 15 years, it's returning with an all-new simulator. The developers are private pilots using the latest technology, with incredible results. It's due for release at some point this year.

So the future is bright for flight simulators and it is possible to bring more and more realism into your front room.

Airbourne Aviation, based at Popham airfield, has developed a partial-motion Ikarus C42 simulator, and offers training for £65 per hour. That too has been approved by Comco.

One of my students used it for five hours over the winter to help improve his landings, and said it was very good. (I've tried it, and it's very realistic. I even did some loops, rolls and spins, which were great fun – Ed.)

Airbourne Aviation Director Matthew Myatt said: "The majority of our students use the C42 simulator as part of their training, and all find it both realistic and helpful, with many able to reduce expensive cockpit time."

Pipistrel has developed its own simulator called the X-Alpha, which uses a real cockpit and a virtual reality headset.

Are they useful for student pilots?

The short answer is yes, but it's important that you use controllers such as a yoke or stick, rudder pedals and a throttle quadrant. It's simply not realistic to use your keyboard or mouse to fly the simulator.

Even with the proper controls, though, one thing that is lost in the simulators is feel, by which I mean that when landing a real aircraft, the subtle feeling of wind gusts and airframe vibrations give the pilot information that is not given from simulators. Simulators also don't subject the body to g-force.

That said, simulators can be great for practising landings, emergency procedures, navigation and familiarity with the local airspace, all knowledge which will save you time and money on real flight training.

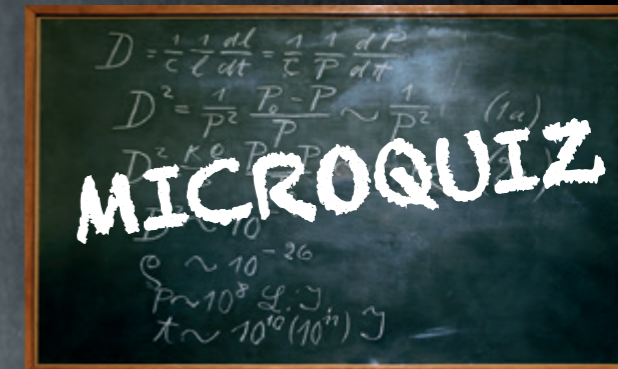
Could they be detrimental to student pilots?

I've flown with student pilots who use desktop flight simulators without rudder pedals, and they try to perform every manoeuvre with ailerons and the elevator and find it difficult to appreciate that the rudder is a primary control.

So an inaccurate simulator could possibly have a detrimental effect on a student's progress. It could also lead to learning bad habits when the instructor is not present to monitor them.

On balance, though, the risk of a simulator having a long-term detrimental effect is small. With the correct set-up, they can be not only a useful training aid but a lot of fun, and something to keep your interest during periods of bad weather. □

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



- 1 Regional QNH should be used:
 - a Outside controlled airspace
 - b In the vicinity of an aerodrome
 - c Inside controlled airspace
- 2 How many layers are found in the atmosphere?
 - a One
 - b Seven
 - c Nine
- 3 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
- 4 Where an aircraft must give way to another, choose the correct order of priority, starting with the aircraft which has priority over the others.
 - a Flying machines, airships, gliders, balloons
 - b Balloons, airships, gliders, flying machines
 - c Balloons, gliders, airships, flying machines
- 5 An aircraft operating VFR cannot enter an AIAA.
 - a True
 - b False
 - c Only with ATC clearance

MF's quizmaster Lawrence Bell is the developer of QuizAero, the online groundschool for microlight student pilots, quizaero.co.uk.

Answers on p22

GASCo

General Aviation Safety Council

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

CHIRP

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



SAFETY



We will fight them on the beaches

BMAA put the CAA right on sand safety, says **John Teesdale**

A BMAA member in Northern Ireland got a nasty shock when the CAA contacted him to say it was going to investigate an alleged breach of regulations relating to a beach landing (actually a touch and go) that he had posted on YouTube.

The CAA eventually closed the case without further action, but it sparked off a lively debate on social media, as microlights have been landing on beaches since they were invented back in the Seventies. Microlights, that is, not beaches.

Behind the scenes, the CAA also contacted BMAA CE Geoff Weighell. Initially, it seemed that the authority was implying it was illegal to land on beaches. Geoff challenged the CAA on this and clarified that it is not, provided the low-flying regulations are observed.

The CAA's main concern was actually public safety, so I have been asked to remind members about the legal and practical aspects of landing on beaches.

Letter of the law

Firstly, let's remember that all aviation laws are made to keep people safe, particularly uninvolved third parties.

For example, the rule that says you must not fly closer than 500ft to a person, vessel, vehicle or structure provides for a safety margin should the pilot

make a handling error, so that the aircraft doesn't hit people or one of those objects.

That then, is Rule Number One to be observed when making beach landings or even flying along a beach (or anywhere else) at low level.

Remember, it is a *distance*, not a height rule, so you can fly along a deserted beach at a safe height above the sand, as long as you remain 500ft from a person, vessel, vehicle or structure.

And beware, because in the Northern Ireland case, the CAA was calling a sea wall a structure.

Another thing to think about is who owns the beach you are landing on. Remember, you can land anywhere with the landowner's permission. The land between low and high tide is known as the foreshore, and is the bit you would normally use. Most of it is owned by the Crown, and I've never known the Queen to object, but beware, as some beaches are controlled by the MoD and some are privately owned.

Over to you, Dave

I have landed on beaches, but I'm nowhere near as experienced as Dave Whiteley from the North West Microlight Club.

Beach landings, as with any unprepared strip, are fraught with danger, and I am indebted to Dave for the following tips and advice which he kindly provided to help you fly safely from beaches.

"We are fortunate as members of the North West Microlight Aircraft Club in that we can practice beach landings on Pilling Sands, a huge beach on the south of Morecambe Bay between the rivers Wyre and Lune. The main points worth considering are as follows:

- Pilling is a vast expanse of flat sand, and it's important to use your peripheral vision as it's quite easy to get confused as to the final touchdown; indeed, nosewheel landings have occurred here in the past.
- Understand tide tables and the difference between neap and spring tides.

- Always keep an eye on the tide, as it can very quickly cut you off if you are unaware.
- Local knowledge is essential and invaluable in making your decision to land.
- Sand isn't all the same: you can have hard wet sand next to soft quicksand and very dry, deep soft sand, particularly above the tide line.
- Areas of pebbles can be prop killers, as can even shallow surface salt water.
- Wind direction is usually different and can be very localised over the coast, so be aware and assess drift carefully.
- Remember that the beach will slope down towards the sea and this slope is not always evident on approach.
- Beaches are popular places, and you need to keep a close eye out for people, horse riders and especially dogs which are often running loose.
- People fly kites, so keep a very careful lookout for them.
- You can't see sandcastles from 50ft.

On a recent flyout we flew to Carradale Bay near Campbeltown and spent the bank holiday based there for some fantastic flying up to Glenforsa.

We landed on the beach, as members Phil Evans and Andrew Beatty had previously landed there and we were well briefed.

The timing was good as well, as neap tides meant that a large area of the beach was useable even at high tide. That said, there were a few points worth noting:

- After landing and taxiing, it's easy to encounter soft dry sand as you move up the beach to get away from the tide line.
- Sand gets absolutely everywhere, so cover up where possible.
- Walk your takeoff route, especially if you have stayed overnight (we had a chalet, he said smugly). The next day there were quite a few jellyfish, some quite large, which had to be avoided or removed, plus driftwood. A beach is a haven for foreign objects.

So all in all, please make sure you are fully aware of all the risks and enjoy landing on your favourite beach – if it's allowed. You'll need to check with local authorities or speak to experienced local pilots.

Before you land, you should carry out an unplanned precautionary landing procedure and have an alternative landing site in mind, and always *if in doubt, go around*.

Finally, I think it's worth a reminder that salt and aluminium do not sit happily together. Salt is extremely corrosive to aircraft structures and can lie hidden between layers, such as the multi-sleeved sections of flexwing leading edges and keel tubes. These tubes don't need to be immersed in saltwater; the salt is in the air when you are near the sea.

It's therefore vitally important that you wash all traces of salt from the whole airframe, not just the undercarriage, when you return to base.

So, there we have it: a comprehensive guide to beach operations. Don't forget to pack your bucket and spade! □

Magic juice, fairy dust and fluffy clouds

Yes, **Deepak Mahajan's** been on the Damyns Hall mushrooms again. But he's still making sense about fuel

I AM enthralled by the magic of flight. Fairy dust, magic juice, blue sky, fluffy clouds and puffin winds are the enablers of real practical aviation that I commit to earn a living.

But let's look at one of the ingredients in a little bit of detail without destroying its magical qualities. Yes, you guessed it: I'm talking about the magic juice, also known as petrol to non-aviators, landlubbers and other gentlefolk.

This complex chemical liquid is made up of really nasty stuff that I imagine is the modern equivalent of witches' blood, sacrificial virgins' fingernails, rotten sheep entrails and other such mephitic ingredients.

Magic juice is naturally found deep inside the Earth's crust where monsters reside, but rather than being made of old dinosaur blood and bones, it's created far deeper by natural chemical reactions between components of the Earth's crust.

Fossil fuel, by the way, was a term encouraged by John Rockefeller, who made a vast fortune by charging a high price for a seemingly limited supply of it.

Naptha, benzene, toluene, xylene, ethylbenzene and more than 100 other such horrible things that come out of the ground are found in petrol.

Petroleum, or rock oil (petra = rock, oleum = oil) as the all-knowing ancient Greeks called the liquid which came out of the rocks and could be set alight, resulting in oily, sooty smoke and light and heat, is now our main source of energy all over the world.

Many thousands of aircraft still use avgas laced with carcinogenic lead particles because their piston engines are of very old design. Our modern engines used in microlight and light sport aircraft use unleaded mogas, as you know.

If you imagine the three witches in Macbeth cackling over their cauldron, bubbling and troubling and emitting noxious fumes, our modern refineries all over the world do the same.

The boiling and evaporation of the base "rock oil" allows petrol to be extracted by a process called fractional distillation, akin to some other liquids that are much more pleasant to imbibe or used to set ablaze certain after-dinner delicacies.

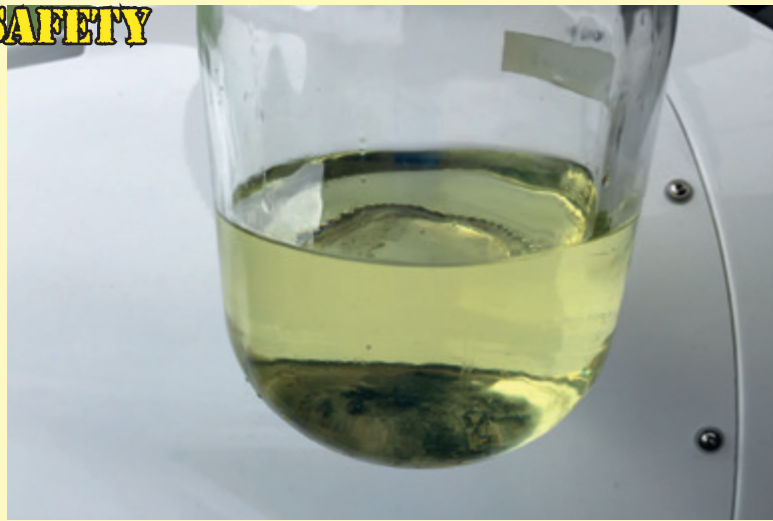
Now the crux of my article, after all the above vaporising, is that the petrol that we use in our modern Rotax engines has a shelf life of some 15-30 days.

Most car petrol tanks are well sealed, but our aircraft tanks are well vented to cope with rapid pressure changes due to the altitude and temperature changes during every flight. It is these well-vented tanks that allow petrol to evaporate more rapidly than in cars.

When aircraft are not flown weekly due to weather or other rea- ▷



SAFETY



It could be a urine sample from Deepak's pet cow, Gertrude, but it's actually three-month-old petrol



The nice fresh stuff



Gertrude, Deepak's pet cow that he thinks nobody knows about. Note clever use of ear warping for banking

sons, the various highly volatile components of the complex chemical liquid evaporate at different rates, leaving heavier components behind.

British Petroleum's fact sheet states that petrol should be used within 30 days in the fuel tanks of aircraft, boats, mowers etc.

In five weeks, petrol will evaporate and lose 15% of its volume, increasing its density from .75 to .79 and increasing its octane rating from RON 98 to RON 99.5.

At the end of five weeks of evaporation, petrol is 5% heavier, increasing the stoichiometric ratio from 13:1 to 12.3:1, thus making the engine run rich and fouling the plugs and increasing fuel consumption.

The different rates of evaporation allow the lighter components to evaporate first, leaving behind the green colour dye, naphtha, benzene, gum, and other chemicals, which normally aid combustion in the engines.

The residue shows a change of colour, unleaded petrol goes from very light green to a darker shade which looks like a good French wine, or bovine urine.

The evaporation of the lighter chemicals from petrol changes the composition such that the chemicals will attack the natural-rubber parts in the fuel system and in the carburettor, causing leaks and misfiring or rough running of the engine, fouling of the spark plugs and blockage of fuel filters, especially paper-element filters.

The residual chemicals may also allow some algae to flourish and block the very fine mesh of metal or nylon filters.

The good preflight practice of draining fuel from the bottom of the fuel tank, in a suitable clear tube, will give you an indication of how old the petrol may be. I have written in the past how to detect whether there is ethanol present in the fuel when doing a fuel drain test.

If the aircraft has not flown for more than 30 days, you must check the fuel quality and either top up with fresh fuel to improve the octane number or replace the entire fuel in the system, while disposing of the old petrol in an eco-friendly and safe manner.

And if your aircraft runs on a mix of petrol and two-stroke oil, evaporation of the petrol will cause the oil-to-petrol ratio to certainly change from 1:50 to 1:40, or worse. □

MICROQUIZ ANSWERS

- 1a Outside controlled airspace
- 2b Seven
- 3b Slow down
- 4c Balloons, gliders, airships, flying machines
- 5b False

PHOTO COMPETITION

Geoff Hill with the winners of the 2019 MF Photo Competition

ON the first Saturday in May, I usually find myself standing in a marquee at Popham announcing the winners of this prestigious competition, but with no Popham, we couldn't keep the 12 monthly winners biting their nails any longer to see who was the best of the best.

As you'll have seen from last month's MF, Popham airfield owner Mike Pearson and the BMAA are hoping to have the event later in the summer, at which point we can have a proper presentation.

The winner gets a framed copy of his or her photo, and the second and third a print carefully rolled up and secured by a ribbon of red silk which has been lovingly hand-woven by blushing Japanese maidens on the eastern slopes of Mount Fuji, then carried down to the port at Yokohama by carefully selected virgin donkeys, and lovingly loaded onto a junk captained by Tokugawa Tanaka, a descendant of the sailor of the same name who in 1600, or just before teatime, was the first to spot on the horizon the ship of William Adams, whose legendary exploits became the basis of James Clavell's epic novel *Shōgun*.

It just docked at Southampton last week, and was immediately cleared by Customs as carrying essential supplies.

We hope you all appreciate the effort the team at MF Global HQ goes to, and hopefully see you all at the planned post-pandemic postponed Popham. Phew.

Yet again, we at MF Global HQ were in awe as, week after week, dozens of great images flocked in for the competition, giving us hundreds to choose from for these awards. Winning the monthly competition is honour enough, so the four chosen here by the editorial judging panel truly are the best of the best.

1 Winner The sky is home, by Aaron Mercer

"To me this says that the sky isn't the limit, the sky is home," said Aaron Mercer of this dramatic shot of a White Horse Aviation C42 on climbout from Membury airfield near Hungerford.

2 Second Big sky, by Ben Davis

Ben was with son Jake on their way back home to Finmere from a trip to Sherburn in Elmet one Saturday.

"We were flying a friend's lovely Eurostar SL, with autopilot engaged, east of Doncaster following the Trent," said Ben.

3 Third= Derwent Dams, by Nigel Waller

Steve Hayes in a Blade 912, taken by Nigel in another one on a trip from Headon to the dams, then to Darley Moor for lunch, on to Measham Cottage and back to Headon in a 193-mile round trip.

4 Third= Chloe, by Clive Mason

Chloe, Clive's nine-year-old daughter, in the Falke 25 over Leicester. "Being able to take your daughter flying is an absolute pleasure, even more so now I can just sit there and enjoy the view. Her stick control is spot on now," said a proud Clive. MF Deputy Editor Norman Burr confessed he was so moved by this picture that it brought a manly tear to his eye. We all knew under that hard-as-nails ninja samurai special forces exterior, he is just a big softie. □





It's a trike, Jim, but not as we know it

Dave Broom on the road-legal Wyvern flexwing concept

DEVELOPED as a private project since early 2014, the Wyvern is a concept vehicle designed to test out new ideas in lightweight flying. The design brief was to produce an aircraft to be flown under microlight regulations which could also be used as road-legal transport with minimal conversion.

The wing should be carried with the vehicle when on the road, allowing fully independent fly/drive touring. It was originally planned to be flown under a flexwing, with a paraglider wing an option for future development.

All previous flexwing trikes have used a traditional wheel layout of two wheels at the rear, with steering provided by a single nosewheel. This simplifies the steering mechanism, while also providing maximum clearance for the rear-mounted pusher propeller. However, for road use a traditional trike wheel layout is relatively unstable during cornering.

Having had previous experience developing three-wheeled road vehicles, designer Mick Broom, aka my dad, very quickly opted for the reverse trike or "tadpole" layout.

This gives two widely-spaced front wheels, providing full Ackermann steering, with a single rear wheel positioned behind the prop arc for stability. A single rear wheel also greatly simplifies

any power drive, as a differential is no longer needed. As this had never been done before, the first stage was to produce a prototype aircraft to discover any problems with the layout. This was built as a side project over some years and first flew in May 2019.

The prototype

Built with a minimal budget, the Wyvern prototype uses a number of spare components from other aircraft.

The test wing was a Chaser, giving a hands-off trim of 50-60mph. The engine is a Hirth F23 lightweight flat twin producing 50hp, which is arguably a bit excessive. The first-stage frame was made from welded steel, although carbon tubing has been investigated for future weight saving.

The front wheels are steered in the conventional push-left-go-right flexwing system using the foot pedals. These also articulate to give throttle and brake control. Adjustable independent suspension is present on all three wheels, with an anti-roll system at the front. Braking is supplied by discs on the front wheels.

The engine is positioned low in the frame to keep the centre of gravity as low as possible. A belt drives the propeller, which is now far enough rearward to clear the trailing edge of the wing. This allows for a much larger diameter propeller than would normally be possible, which also produces far greater thrust with lower noise output.

The pylon is triangulated to remove the need for a view-obscuring front strut. This has the benefit of being easily adjusted to accommodate different wings for future testing. It is also designed to allow hinging the wing base bar down to supports on the main trike frame after removing only a single pin.

This aids rigging, as well as allowing any future topless wings to be folded on the trike in minutes for storage or road use.

Flight testing

On the ground, the benefits of having two steering wheels are immediately apparent. The trike has much more directional control, and is amazing fun to just drive around, even without the wing attached.

The trike is designed to hang slightly nose-up, as with other flexwings, to ensure that the rear wheel touches the ground first

during landing. This allows crosswind landings to the same extent as any other trike.

Having a single rear wheel positioned so far back allows for plenty of suspension travel, as well as vastly improving stability during takeoff when used with a paraglider wing.

Acceleration was extremely quick with the large propeller fitted, and at no point during the flight testing was full throttle ever used.

One downside of having such a large propeller was a very noticeable torque reaction which caused the trike to swing sideways after takeoff. It is thought that this effect can be mitigated in the future with careful adjustment of the thrust line.

In all other respects, there were no substantial differences to the flight characteristics compared with a standard trike.

Future development

The next stage would be to provide power to the rear wheel for road use. An additional benefit would be reducing the takeoff roll even further.

An electric motor in line with the rear suspension mount would appear to be the best way to do this. The existing internal combustion engine could be down-sized and provide a generator to charge batteries which could be positioned below the pilot seat. The IC engine could also drive the prop (possibly in addition to another electric motor) via a modified drive belt. Both motors and IC engine would be controlled by the existing foot throttle using a fly-by-wire system currently under development.

We would be very interested to hear from anyone with experience of these sorts of systems. The Wyvern is currently being developed on a non-commercial basis as a hobby project, but any ideas or advice would be very welcome. Please get in touch at info@airplayaircraft.co.uk □

Facing page Looks great, even on the ground

This page, from top 50hp Hirth F23 is a bit more powerful than needed; neat front steering and suspension; and large-diameter prop gives greater thrust, but creates a torque reaction on takeoff





Small
plane,
BIG
ambition



1

Chris Antrobus is designing and building his own SSDR – from scratch

I DEVELOPED an interest in flying when I was seven, after leaning heavily on my parents to buy me my first radio-controlled aircraft. Then after watching *A Plane Is Born*, it became my goal to design and build my own aircraft.

I studied Aerospace Engineering at Kingston to MSc level, with the intention of moving into light-aircraft design and unusual mission-profile aircraft like firefighting and crop-spraying. I had little interest in commercial aviation as a career.

After my MSc, I apprenticed and worked at Retrotec for six years doing historic aircraft restoration. As my responsibility and welding skills accrued, the pay didn't, and I eventually left to start my own business, which is called DFR Restorations based on a farm in East Sussex, with a soon to be restored landing strip.

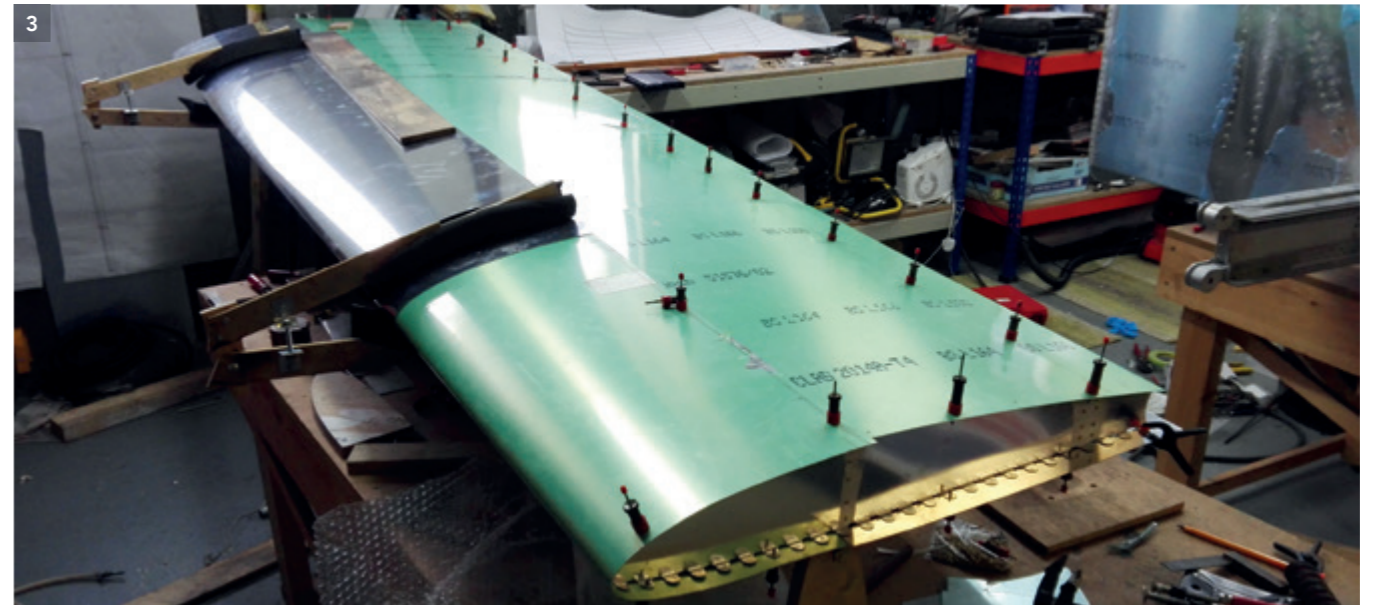
I'm now 32, and still trying to establish myself in the world, but I'm known to some. I'm a certified welder for mild and stainless steels, and am currently building two Feiseler Storch fuselages as my main projects. I also do car work or a variety of other things, from building hangar doors to well covers, when work is short.

I learned to fly over a summer at Toronto Island Airport when I was 19, then bought a share in a Cherokee at White Waltham. After a year of that, I had four years on a Robin DR400 180 out of Spilstead Farm, and now have a half share in a Nicollier Menestrel flying out of the same strip.

I've about 200h on the Menestrel, 70 on the Cessna 172 I learned on, 35 on the ▶



2



3



4

“““

It'll be called Titan, Goliath or something equally ironic

Main photo, opposite Chris in his impressive looking workshop

This page

- 1 Chris checking out the rear fuselage for size – or possibly preparing for a spot of jousting
- 2 With a bit of imagination, I'm now at 1000ft
- 3 Wings coming together
- 4 Curves of beauty, and Chris' welding skills

“”

Virtually every part is hand-made; I even machined the wheels and most of the bolts from solid metal

▷ Cherokee and the rest on the Robin, with a smattering of others.

I've no microlight experience, but I'm 6ft 2in and around 93kg and was getting frustrated that I had no chance of fitting into any available single-seater for cost-effective flying. What I wanted was a touring aircraft experience with closed canopy, good range, high cruise speed and heating.

The build

I started out with a wood and fibreglass design owing to material costs, but didn't like the way it was going. I then took up employment specialising in sheet metal work; the design you see here is the result.

I'd planned to certify the wood and fibreglass design as a VLA, but the LAA was highly dubious of an ash/fibreglass mix, which was another reason for the switch to a sheet metal SSDR.

It'll be called Titan, Goliath or something equally ironic owing to its size.

It has tapered outer wings with two-thirds span-hinged Fowler flaps. I originally started with an elliptical wing, but that would have been too complex for alloy construction, and only provides in the region of a couple of per cent improvement in lift and drag over a tapered wing.

The MTOW is planned to be 320kg including a ballistic chute, and it's designed for a 6ft 2in pilot up to 110kg, although I think with the final weight, this will be 100kg to allow a realistic amount of fuel.

I was originally aiming for an empty weight of 150kg without chute, but I think 165-180kg will be the final weight with chute and accretion of mass during the build.

I've already bought the engine, a 40hp Rotax 447, and the 35-litre tank should give a good 5h endurance. I'm aiming for a 90kt cruise.

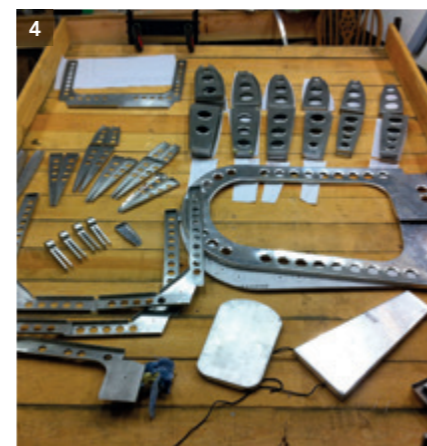
Virtually every part is hand-made; I even machined the wheels and most of the bolts from solid metal. The wing roots were cut on a bandsaw and planar filed from 1 in L156 Bar. All the ribs were hand-formed over ply formers.

If you want a closer look at my company and the project, see df-uk.co.uk/my-ssdr. □



Photos

- 1 What the finished aircraft will look like
- 2 Fuselage and tailplane taking shape
- 3 Machining one of the wheel hubs
- 4 Virtually every part was hand-made by Chris



Grass? So last week, dude

Brian Dixon was the first visitor to land on the new AstroTurf runway at Sandown

RATHER than give myself 10 reasons why I couldn't, I decided to focus on the one reason why I should.

I had recently obtained my licence, had the huge total of nearly 30h under my belt, had attended an excellent GASCo Safety Evening at Old Sarum and had decided to try for my Bronze BMAA Wings Award.

Which was a very good excuse to visit Sandown and give the newly laid AstroTurf runway a close inspection.

I booked a C42 with Airbourne Aviation, the excellent flying school at Popham which had somehow packed all the necessary information and skill into the head of a fiftysomething aspiring pilot, turned up at Popham with my chum Jon Henley, and ran through my flight plan with Airbourne Director Matthew Myatt, one of the most supportive people I know.

Our aircraft for the day was G-CDMS, my favourite out of all the C42s in Airbourne's fleet.

Although I have SkyDemon, I still use a flight log and stopwatch, just in case technology lets me down, and the Hampshire countryside was stunning from the air as I pointed out the odd landmark and answered questions from Jon.

It was only when I contacted Sandown for airfield information that they told me I would be the first visiting pilot to land on the new AstroTurf runway. Since the main reason for the flight was to get my bronze award, this was icing on the cake.

The landing was quite straightforward and the runway felt both smooth and very normal, despite the surrounding grassed area being a bit soggy. Even better, Sandown owner Danial Subhani had videoed my landing as a keepsake of the day.

The trip back to Popham was just as enjoyable, although the headwind was so strong that at one point over the Needles Jon started laughing after spotting a white van moving faster than us on the coast road below.

After a trip of 117nm, I'd achieved my bronze award, circumnavigated the Isle of Wight for the first time and become the first visiting pilot to land on Sandown's AstroTurf runway.

Since then, of course, lockdown has grounded us all, but what's keeping my spirits up is the thought that one day soon, I'll be able to visit my friend G-CDMS. Oh, and Jon. □

EGHP Popham - EGHN Isle of Wight/Sandown 04 Jan 2020

Flight from Popham to Isle of Wight/Sandown

Takeoff from EGHP Popham at 04 Jan 2020 10:15 Z
Landing at EGHN Isle of Wight/Sandown at 04 Jan 2020 10:59 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 44 min (0.7 hours)
DISTANCE FLOWN: 49 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 2,396 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 95 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 66 kt

TAT	Dist	Elapsed	Time

PILOT: Brian Dixon

Left, from top Brian landing at Sandown (photo: Danial Subhani); Sandown, prior to the laying of a fabulous AstroTurf runway; and Brian's Popham to Sandown route



Blackwing 600RG



JMB VL3

Worth weighting for

Lawrence Bell on another five amazing microlights we may see if and when the UK adopts 600kg

IN the June 2018 *MF*, after other European countries increased their microlight limit to 600kg, I looked at five amazing aircraft we would be able to fly if the UK did the same. They were the Blackshape Prime, the Skyleader GP One and 600, the Shark and the TL-3000 Sirius.

I actually got to fly the Prime for the February 2019 *MF*, and it was amazing, cruising at over 140kt and handling like a fighter jet – as you'd expect for £150,000.

The GP One is a serious challenger to Pipistrel and Flight Design: a carbon-composite two-seater more competitively priced at around £59,000 ready to fly, and with pleasant handling characteristics and a 94kt cruise.

The stylish 600, Skyleader's flagship model, is an evolution of the Kappa 77 KP-2U Sova which was popular across Europe in the late Nineties and early Noughties. With retractable gear as an option, it can cruise at 122kt and came in at less than £80,000. It has one of the largest cabins in its class.

The Shark is similar to the Blackshape Prime in terms of looks and performance, but with a slightly more palatable £105,000 price tag.

Somewhat less exotic in looks but not at all less appealing, the TL-3000 Sirius has a glass cockpit as standard and a yoke control on both sides, can be used for training or touring, and was just over £77,000.

Now that the UK seems certain to adopt 600kg, let's look at another five aircraft that could potentially take to the skies when that happens.

At the moment they'd be required to meet *BCAR Section S* requirements in order to fly in the UK, but as Mark Shortman, the Policy Manager at the CAA's GA Unit, said at Popham two years ago, the next obvious step after 600kg is common approval, in which an aircraft manufactured in other European countries was more or less automatically approved in the UK, and vice versa.

Blackwing 600RG

The Blackwing is an advanced microlight manufactured in Sweden, with a cantilever low-wing carbon airframe. The sleek and sexy airframe is powered by the Rotax 912 family of engines, and the base fixed-gear model cruises at 135kt.

The Blackwing 600RG has a retractable gear, and the manufacturer states that it can cruise at 150kt with the 100hp 912S.

Fitted with the 135hp Rotax 915iS, it recently set the record for the fastest microlight in the world, reaching an average speed of 212kt over a 15km stretch and a top speed of 219kt.

JMB VL3

JMB claims that the VL3 has a top cruising speed of 205kt. The composite aircraft has a 8.4m wing span, 140-litre fuel tanks, variable-pitch propeller and optional retractable gear.

Prices range from approximately £127,000 to £163,000, depending on your choice of engine and avionics.

Texas Aircraft Colt

As you may guess from the name, this all-aluminium aircraft is built in Texas for the USA LSA category. It's an evolution of an earlier Brazilian design called the Inpaer Conquest 180.

The Colt has yoke controls, four-point harnesses, a ballistic parachute and a Dynon SkyView glass cockpit.

The standard engine used is the 100hp Rotax 912S. The useful load of 220kg is not as high as some other aircraft in this category, but the sumptuous interior may go some way to explaining that.

The aircraft also boasts a 110kt cruise at 75% power and 120 litre fuel tanks. It was priced at £135,000 in 2019.

Remos GXiS

The Remos GX family of aircraft is manufactured in Germany and has proven popular in Europe and the USA. The airframe is made from carbon fibre, and the cockpit is reinforced with layers of aramid for extra safety.

Remos claims the GX is the perfect trainer thanks to its gentle handling characteristics, low maintenance costs and proven history, with some aircraft already achieving in excess of 20,000 landings at flying clubs.

It cruises at 102kt with the Rotax 912 or 912iS. The large Fowler flaps reduce the stall speed to 42kt. Other features include a simple wing-fold system which only takes 10 minutes, and the ability to tow banners or gliders.

Flight Design CTLS 2020

The CT has come a long way since its inception in 1997. The model has been refined many times, and the CTLS is the market leader in the Light Sport category in the USA.

The 2020 edition of the CTLS is a further refinement: lower empty weight, a new interior, redesigned cowling, better fuel system and Garmin G3X avionics suite are just a few of the improvements. Its smaller brother, the CTSS, already flies as a 472.5kg microlight in the UK. □



Texas Colt...



...and plush interior



CTLS 2020 cockpit



Remos GXiS



Remos cockpit

Favourite flights



Best day ever: Tony Rowlands

A FORECAST of sunshine and light winds last July was the trigger for a trip to East Anglia by GTR flexwing, stopping first at the old wartime bomber base at Rougham.

After a look around the preserved control tower, I headed for Seething in beautiful sunshine but increasing wind.

Tuning onto its frequency, I heard a Cessna 152 taxiing out for circuits and the radio operator saying the wind was gusting 24kt with a 60° crosswind. The Cessna promptly returned to the parking area!

After a few minutes I radioed them and received the same warning, and on short final angled across the runway, I floated some distance bucking up and down, but the wind checks were in the order of 12kt and the touchdown was smooth.

Taxiing to the parking area drew gazes from people clearly in awe of flexwing panache – or sanity.

The flight home was via Great Yarmouth and the Norfolk Broads, with a landing at Little Snoring, then past several famous but now disused aerodromes, landing back at base in, at last, calm conditions. Can days out get any better?

Above Tony departing Seething



Fast but fabulous: Joan Walsh packs a day's fun into 25 minutes

IN my former life as an instructor, I did quite a few permit check flights once the rules allowed owners to do them, but most of those flights were combined with an instructional flight where the lesson was “how to conduct a check flight”. This was enjoyable, useful and enabled owners to clock up hours towards their NPPL requirement of one hour under instruction.

My most enjoyable flight this past year was the permit check flight on our syndicate-owned TST. It was my turn to do it, and I wasn't instructing, so I loaded up with hubby as ballast and note-taker and a full tank of fuel to get the weight somewhere near the 380kg maximum.

There was no need to explain and demonstrate; just go up there and do it...

Ground checks done, engine good and warm, lined up and stopwatch at the ready: go! After takeoff, trim for best climb at 45kt and start the clock when passing 500ft.

It seemed unfair to the poor little engine to maintain full power for the four-and-a-bit minutes it took to reach 1500ft, but she got us there safely.

After a minute's rest at cruise power, we then nudged her around the flight envelope in sideslips, steep turns and wobbling up and down in a damped phugoid. She stalled normally, with the usual objections from a light machine that was designed to fly, not to plummet.

Apart from the uphill thrash at the start, it had all been great fun, but now came the exciting bit – the TST was not

designed to go fast, and her V_{ne} is 80kt. Getting her up to that sort of speed is a downhill adventure and needs all four of the eyes on board (six, if you count my specs).

We allocate tasks: both do a good all-round lookout below the horizon, for that is where we'll be going.

Ginge then divides his attention between lookout, the altimeter and the ASI, while I divide mine between the ASI, the tacho and the behaviour of our little aeroplane.

Set fast cruise power and down we go; more and more forward pressure on the stick as the windscreen fills with fields and power lines.

Quick check of the ASI, and we've not reached 70kt yet. Push the stick further forward against the aeroplane's resistance and add some power within limits.

“75,” shouts Ginge, I ease back on the throttle then start to release some of the forward pressure, and the speed bleeds off while nose rises gradually.

A few seconds later all is calm and the aircraft feels her normal self again. Ginge writes 77kt on the notepad.

A slipping “Spitfire final” turn over the woods onto the smooth green of the runway, and as we taxi back to the hangar, I can't help smiling.

Less than 25min, engine start to stop, but a day's worth of fun.

Left Joan, back home in the TST



Homeward bound: Tam Carr

A MAIN motivation to gain my NPPL was to fly myself over Norham, the village where I grew up on the Scottish-English border. The photo shows the village with its castle and the River Tweed which marks the border.

I got my licence late in November last year, aged 64, and wasted no time in planning the cross-country flight towards my BMAA Wings Bronze Award.

On Hogmanay 2019 I departed from Perth in a Eurostar with my son-in-law, Martyn Bryce, as passenger for the flight, which was magical and a dream come true.

We followed the River Tweed to Lempitlaw for the away landing before returning to Perth over East Fortune and the Firth of Forth.

I had achieved one of my first goals as a pilot, and am now planning the flight for a Silver Award.

Left Tam over Norham, the village where he grew up

To the Continent, by Jove!

Gavin Curtis looks back at his first big flying adventure – touring France in a C42

Facing page
At Sandown ready to cross the Channel
Below
The route to France



It was 4.30am when that dreaded sound woke me. Then that dread quickly turned to excitement as I remembered that today was the start of my first big flying adventure abroad!

The month before, I'd left Endeavour, my C42 based in Newry, Northern Ireland, at Husbands Bosworth airfield near Birmingham. As well as its yearly maintenance check, for this trip it had got a ballistic parachute, an attitude indicator and a traffic monitoring device to help me detect other planes in the sky that may become a threat.

My lifelong friend Shane O'Hagan was to join me on the adventure, starting with a commercial flight at 7am to Birmingham, then in the newly serviced Endeavour to the Isle of Wight, then on to Cherbourg.

All being well, we planned to push on to our first stop for the night, Niort-Marais Poitevin airfield.

It was a beautiful sunny day at the start of summer, with the odd wispy cloud, and the Channel was set to be completely clear of cloud and with a high-pressure system in the area. Perfect, I thought.

Soon we were at the airfield, and I was reunited with my aircraft. We quickly got the plane packed with two small rucksacks containing a change of clothes each, and some tools and spares for the aircraft – just the essentials to stay within weight limits.

I had accommodation booked near Perpignan, and my family were planning to fly out a few days later in the week by airliner, bringing a bigger suitcase containing all I would need for a couple of weeks exploring the south of France by air.

Leg 1: Husbands Bosworth to Sandown, Isle of Wight

Having arrived previously at Husbands Bosworth in my plane a few weeks before, I was under no illusion as to how difficult it can be to navigate on the ground.

There's a campsite on-site, with many children roaming the grounds, it's a huge glider club with busy membership, and visiting aircraft are generally not welcome unless they are visiting the popular maintenance facilities. So after holding for 15min, I didn't need to be told twice when I was given clearance to take off, then turn south asap.

With the 912S effortlessly lifting us into the sky at 1000ft/min, I activated the transponder, thanked our hosts and dialled up London control to receive a basic service. Except that the airwaves were so hectic that it took five minutes to find a space to transmit.

Not only was every pilot taking advantage of the weather, but we were tracking towards the busiest airspace in the UK.

My new traffic system sprang into life, alerting us to many planes around us within 3000ft and a 10-mile radius. It had been worth the investment.

However, since many planes still operate without a transponder and it wouldn't pick up everyone, I kept a good lookout, as there were many airspaces to avoid or climb over. The Southampton area was to be the most challenging, and would require accurate tracking and altitude holding while maintaining a good look out for traffic.

Cruising at 3000ft and 85kt, we admired the views of places we had heard of, but never seen or been to before.

With around 100nm to run to the Isle of Wight and the aircraft handling like a dream, everything felt good. I was very excited about getting into France this evening, but also a little apprehensive of the inevitable sea crossing that comes with that.

While completing my slow but detailed traffic scan, my eyes suddenly locked on a large bug that had obviously smashed into my windscreen. Damn, I thought, right in my eyeline.

I decided it was a large bumble bee, then started wondering what a bee would be doing at 3000ft.

Before I could complete the thought, though, the



bee suddenly morphed into a large GA aircraft less than half a mile away and coming straight at us.

I immediately closed the throttle and put the aircraft into a hard dive to the right. Having considered this very scenario in my mind many times, I'd decided that I'd always dive, presuming most pilots will pull up.

The aircraft, which I believe was a Cessna 182, ploughed straight through our previous path. I don't believe he had seen me at all! I cursed him for not having a transponder on as he zoomed past close enough that I could see he had sunglasses on.

Within seconds, I felt like I was going into some sort of shock, like the feeling you get when you almost have a car accident and you know it. The realisation of how close that was, and the fact he didn't even budge or see me, shook me to the core.

I'd read about this and planned for it, but I didn't think it would be that terrifying. I was literally shaking with fear after what had just happened.

I quickly reminded myself to forget about it and fly the plane. I could analyse it and think it through on the ground. I remained calm on the outside for the sake of my passenger, but inside I'd just had a serious reality check.

My traffic system wouldn't show everything, and London Control was way too busy to even begin to offer anybody potential conflict alerts, so it was vital to keep my eyes peeled.

I asked London if I could change to Southampton, as we knew they would be too busy to initiate this to us, and after calling up Southampton and explaining my intended routing just under their airspace, they were happy for us to proceed and made us aware of some Flybe Dash-8s in the area.

Soon Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight beyond were in view and looking amazing, with clear blue skies in the background. It was 11am, and with 10nm to run, I switched frequency to Sandown Radio and was informed of another aircraft approaching from a similar location as us.

Within seconds, a female Irish accent came over the radio, and we spotted a small yellow aircraft at our five o'clock.

I decided to be courteous and let our fellow Irish aviators go first, announced that I would do a 360 to reposition behind the other aircraft, and got thanks from the pilot in return.

Joining left downwind, I identified it as a Piper

“““

The bee on my windscreen suddenly turned into a Cessna 182, heading straight for us. I closed the throttle and put the aircraft into a hard dive...

Cub, and soon I too was on final and looking forward to my first landing in a couple of weeks.

Having the ground map overlays in SkyDemon is very useful, especially for airfields like this where the taxiways might not be so apparent to a first-time visitor, and it quickly became obvious that this was one very busy airfield.

There were around 30 aircraft parked up and visiting for the day, and we joined a queue at the fuel pumps to get a refill for the next leg across the English Channel to Cherbourg.

At the pumps, we were approached by the Irish couple who had landed in the yellow Piper Cub. They thanked us for allowing them to land first, and said they'd flown in from Galway.

I'm not sure why I felt surprised, but I did think that it was a little bit crazy that they had flown all the way from Ireland in this tiny yellow plane (which was much bigger than mine!).

For some reason, us doing it in a microlight seemed to be perfectly normal. It's at moments like this that the gravity of the undertaking ahead hit home.

However, I'd spent a year preparing meticulously for this, and I was determined to pull it off both safely and successfully, since I thrive on aviation challenges and the excitement of touring by private plane.

Soon we were enjoying a great lunch from Sandown's on-site restaurant and relaxing outside on picnic benches in the sun with around 100 other people, all gazing at the skydivers that were continuously jumping over the field.

We realised that we were going to need to negotiate a suitable time to depart around the skydiving activity. I'd planned to turn around the aircraft and ourselves in 60min, but 90min later I found myself still sitting, enjoying the sun and in no rush, as I knew the next sector was straight into a sea crossing.

Finally, I looked at the pure blue skies and thought "Now is the time to go to France." After paying our fees at the tower, we returned to prepare the aircraft and our lifejackets to cross the sea. □

• Next month: will our heroes make it, or will they never be seen again? Tune into MF TV to find out!



The answer to life, the universe and everything

Douglas Adams was wrong, says Damien Minnock. It's 503, not 42. Just simple Quantum mechanics, really

I LEARNED to fly in a Thruster T600N at Kernan Aviation in Northern Ireland with instructor Raphael O'Carroll in 2005.

I also did a couple of hours in a C42, but much preferred the Thruster, got my licence in April 2006, and a month later was the proud owner of an X-air 582, which I flew for 80h before buying a lovely Skyranger 912S a year later. Over the next five years, I logged 345h flying the Skyranger all over Ireland and the UK.

In 2010, just for fun, I decided to try a weight-shift lesson as part of a revalidation flight. One hour turned into two, and I was hooked. A few months later, I finished a conversion course with instructor Gerry Snoddon in Newtownards and bought a 1988 Pegasus XL 462.

With a one-year old boy at home, flying became less regular, and I had a decision to make on the rare occasions I got to the airfield: should I fly my Skyranger or my Pegasus XL 462?

There was really no contest: the Pegasus XL 462 won every time. This continued for another two years, flying the XL on nice calm days, and the Skyranger when the weather didn't favour a 45mph flexwing.

By now, little boy number two was on his way, and having fallen in love with weight-shift flying, I decided to sell the Skyranger.

With two time sponges now at home, flying took a back seat but the love I had for flying never left me. When the stars aligned, I got away in my Pegasus XL, but it was very infrequent.

In 2014, I became the proud owner of a lovely Quantum 503, built in 2000 and shipped to its new owner in Ireland, who logged 250h in it over the next six years.

It changed owners, then didn't fly at all until 2014, when I heard it was for sale and went to look at it in an agricultural shed on the grounds of Limetree airfield. It looked dirty and sad, but full of potential. The wing was packed away in a wing bag.

With the help of a couple of friends, it was transported by road to its new home at Ballyboy airfield, where it was washed, cleaned, serviced and brought back to life. The engine was sent away to Eccleston Aviation, and was checked over, inspected and serviced, and received a new piston and a full bill of health from Simon Worthington.

The engine was married to the trike and prop again in February 2015, and in April G-BZJD was fully signed off to fly again after passing its permit and check flight with flying colours.

I'm no expert, just a regular Joe Soap microlight pilot. This is the fourth aircraft I've owned, and I love it.

In the same way that the Skyranger was a big jump from the X-air, the Quantum is a big leap from the Pegasus XL 462.

The XL cruised along happily at 45-48mph, and the wing was huge, slow, draggy and safe. It was the perfect ship to gain experience on. I flew it the length and breadth of Ireland. I even flew it in one day from the southern tip of Ireland, Mizen Head, to the most northerly point at Malin Head, which took me 9.5h.

It was a fantastic adventure in a classic ship, and the 72h experience in the XL set me up nicely for my new hotship.

The Quantum 503 is the basic model in the Quantum, family which first became available in 1996. Over 600 were built, between the Quantum 503, Quantum Sport/Quantum 582 and the Quantum SuperSport/Quantum 912.

All models had the 10.4m-span Q2 wing in common, which is a double-surface design covered in Dacron. Rather than quot-

Facing page Looking immaculate after this year's spring clean

This page Time Sponge One, aka Oisín, 11, with the Quantum at Kernan airfield, Tandragee (top); and Damien with Time Sponge Two, aka Lorcan, seven (below)



ing specifications from the manual or the internet, I'll give my personal experience.

She's a pure joy to fly, cruising along hands off at 55-60mph and 5400rpm, burning just 11 l/h of the finest two-stroke premixed fuel. If I'm flying into a little bit of a headwind, I can pull the bar in a little and get 65mph; a little bit more of a pull and a few extra pounds of pressure on the throttle will give 70mph.

At full chat, my little Rotax 503 delivers 50bhp and pulls the Quantum and myself off the ground in around 100m, climbing out at 850-1000ft/min solo.

Two up with an adult in the back, the climb rate is 350-500ft/min, depending on the passenger. However, I usually fly on my own other than the odd occasion when I take either of my 10 or seven-year-old boys up with me, and they're still too light to make much of a difference to the climb performance.

The stall is very benign, and occurs at just under 35mph, with no crazy wing drop, just a nice easy mush, and recovery is very simple. It really gives you great confidence.

The V_{ne} is 90mph, but you could never get close to that unless you were in awful trouble brought about by pushing the envelope too far.

At just over 75mph, the Quantum is begging the pilot to relax and wise up, and it's happiest cruising along all day at 55-60mph.

Landing is a breeze, and it's got fantastic short-field capabilities: I've comfortably been into a 180m farm strip on a couple of occasions.

The Q2 wing handles thermals and winds with ease. I've been on my way back to the airfield a few times when the winds were stronger than forecasted, but although it was uncomfortable at the time, the wing was well able to safely cope with the conditions and safely get me down. I generally limit my flying to maximum wind speeds of 15mph.

SECONDHAND SECRETS



▷ It flies hands-off without turning, and takeoff, approach and landing is the same 55-60mph as cruise.

It has a cable-operated trim wheel on the right of the control frame, but I never use it. The manual suggests that the pitch trim wheel can adjust the in-flight airspeed between 40 and 60 mph. My trim wheel adjusts my airspeed to between 45 and 50mph, but if I trim slow in flight, I can't get fast trim to settle anywhere near 55mph. If I set my trim to fast, it will then remain trimmed in-flight to 55-60mph, so I just leave it all the time at a fast trim setting.

I'm sure an upgrade to the trim system on my wing would sort that out, but the pressure on the bar for slow flight is very light, so it's not an issue to me.

It is very easy to own and maintain, even for a mechanical ignoramus like myself. The air-cooled Rotax 503 twin is a lovely little engine, bullet proof and easy to service. I have done the de-coke, tensioned and changed the fan belt, and done all other minor servicing myself.

The engine on my aircraft is the dual carb, dual ignition DCDI variant, with a twin-bladed Ivo propeller.

With two young boys at home and a busy full-time job, I don't get flying anywhere near as much as I would like to, but that's OK; it's a natural part of life for anyone with a family, and as the boys are getting bigger, I have more opportunities to sneak away.

When I do get away flying, I like to make the most of my time, and I enjoy flying two-hour legs to visit friends at other airfields. In that way I get to log four or five hours in a day, and the Quantum is so comfortable that two hours in it is always a pleasure.

In 2019 I logged 50h 45min in G-BZJO, but I don't consider 50h per year to be worth the investment required to upgrade.

It does everything I need from a microlight now, and puts a huge grin on my face for days after flying it.

When the time comes and I am getting closer to 80h per year again, I will invest in something more capable of longer distance touring. It will be a weight-shift, without any doubt, and my dream would be to own a P&M GT450, but for the time being, my little Quantum 503 will do me just fine, for another three years at least.

In 1998 Brian Milton and Keith Reynolds flew around the world in a Quantum 912. If you have not yet had the pleasure of

reading *Global Flyer*, Brian's book on the trip, please do so. It's a great read, with loads of drama and loads of adventure.

Brian completed the journey solo in the end, and both he, Keith and the Quantum survived all that was thrown at them. It really is a wonderful little aeroplane, not only capable of flying around the world, but still loved by all its owners around the same world.

Pegasus and Mainair merged in 2003, after which P&M only made Quantums to order. The last Quantum 503 was made around 2007, and the last Quantum 912 around 2014.*

Just before P&M Aviation closed its doors in May 2019, it had begun to offer an upgrade to the Quantum called a Quantum Leap. I thought that was a fantastic idea, and the many upgrades gave it a cruise speed of 70mph.

The new owner of P&M, Albatross Flying Systems, already makes the Cruiser, which looks very much like a Quantum, so I wouldn't be surprised if the Quantum makes an entrance back onto the market at some stage, and perhaps a Quantum Leap with a choice of wings.

I love my Quantum 503, and I'm sure that any fellow Quantum owners out there love theirs every bit as much as I do.

If you're a new flexwing jockey and interested in owning your own aircraft on a shoestring budget, check out a Quantum and you won't be disappointed. There'll be the option of a Quantum 503, 582 or 912 on the secondhand market to suit anyone's pocket.

Safe flying and happy landings. □

* Additional information from Norman Burr and Bill Brooks



Above Damien's Quantum being ignored by the local wildlife. Typical. No taste, sheep

Right Nice tidy cockpit layout – and who wants to go any faster than that?



Airfield quiz

After a stroke of genius by *MF* reporter Paul Kiddell, this month we start a quiz to test your knowledge of UK airfields.

Since Paul flies more in a week than most of us do in a month, and he wore out his previous camera after 442,827 shots, no better man to keep our brain cells sparkling.

Not to mention giving us a bucket list of airfields to visit when we get flying again!

Answers on p42





AIRFIELD OF THE MONTH



1



2



3

Sigh. Well, we'll get back there soon

Paul Kiddell on Sywell, one of his favourite airfields, with Spitfires, Mustangs and a great history

AS I sit and write this in late March, the Government has just announced a lockdown which has effectively brought recreational flying to an end for the foreseeable future. These are unprecedented times, but when we emerge at the other end, I am sure we are going to enjoy some truly epic flying adventures!

One of my favourite UK airfields is Sywell Aerodrome, 5nm NE of Northampton. It was founded in 1928 by a group of enthusiasts led by brothers Jack and George Linnell, who formed the Northamptonshire Aero Club, and the airfield has remained in private ownership ever since.

In 1935, with war clouds gathering, Brooklands Aviation began training RAF and FAA pilots on Tiger Moths under contract from the War Department as No. 6 Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS).

It was here that my distant relative and family legend, Lt John "Jimmy" Kiddell, Fleet Air Arm, arrived in August 1938 to start his pilot training.

Jimmy went on to fly the Swordfish and had a very challenging, brutal and brief war, losing most of his squadron before he too was shot down on the Dutch coast while attacking invasion barges in May 1940.

Taken prisoner, he ended up in the famous *Great Escape* camp, Stalag Luft III. Sadly, Jimmy suffered from combat stress, and was shot dead going over the wire on 1 July 1943. Ives in the film *The Great Escape* was based on Jimmy, who remains buried in Poznan to this day.

By 1942, some 126 Tiger Moths were resident on pilot training duties, with over 2500 wartime Allied pilots learning to fly at Sywell. In the large hangars which are now industrial units, Brooklands repaired and overhauled some 1841 Wellington bombers and assembled and flight-tested 260 Lancasters, including modifying two for the famous 617 Sqn Dam Buster raid.

In 1953, RAF flying training at Sywell, by now operating Chipmunks, finally came to an end, while Brooklands continued to work on RAF Mosquitoes, Harvards, Valetta and Varsity aircraft into the 1960s.

As RAF work dried up, Brooklands concentrated on civilian flying training, sales and maintenance.

The airfield was a hotbed of GA flying, full of larger-than-life characters such as the late Bob Crowhurst (whose son Pete flies a Eurostar and Minimax from his Ringsted strip) who took part in Sywell's many exciting airshows.

Indeed, the 1970 airshow saw Mike Parker flying a Tiger Moth with Malcolm Major sitting on the lower wing firing his Colt revolver with live ammunition at balloons tied to a trailer (and no, Dan Subhani, don't even think about it...).

The 1970s saw Sywell hosting the annual PFA Rally, and I attended my first one in July 1978 at the age of 14. I camped with my school mate under a bit of tarp and two sticks which our school had lent us, cheerily insisting that it was a viable tent.

Needless to say, we got soaked, but what a great weekend for us young aviation enthusiasts, wandering around so many interesting planes.

The PFA rally left in 1979, then, of course, returned with the annual LAA rally in September. Never in my wildest dreams could a 14-year-old me have imagined that one day I'd return to the rally to camp in almost the same spot, not only with a palatial tent but with my own plane!

Wind forward to 2020, and back in the normality of January, flying partner Alex Smith and I were taking advantage of the record high pressure to do a two-day, eight-airfield tour.

Sywell is always a great stop off, with its multiple runways and excellent facilities. Having left Coventry, we talked to Sywell Information on 122.705 and joined downwind before arriving on the expansive 1258m concrete runway 03L.

The hard runway finally opened in 2010 after a somewhat epic 13-year battle against local Nimbys.

Sywell had not been immune to the record wet winter, and the three grass runways (671m 03R/21L, 602m 05/23, 799m 14/32) remained closed.

Parking at the pumps, we received an excellent welcome and withering banter from the Sywell ground crew, Anthony Barnett and Marcus Ansell. Sywell is one of the few airfields to have mogas on the self-service credit card pump at a very good saving (£1.57/litre as at 26 March) over avgas or UL-91 at other fields.

After fuelling and paying the £12 microlight landing fee, Alex and I went to the Pilots' Mess café for coffee and cake. The Pilots'



Once we get through the current crisis, there's going to be some party. See you there!

Mess is open daily 9am-4pm (10am on Sunday), and has a balcony with excellent views across the airfield.

Below the café sits Flylight Airsports, a cornerstone of UK microlighting run by stalwarts Paul Dewhurst, Stewart Bond and Ben Ashman.

Flylight, of course, not only manufactures the Skyranger range and trikes, including the Dragonfly and PeaBee, but is also the UK dealer for Kiev propellers and offers an extensive range of microlight parts and consumables through its online shop. Flylight works in partnership with Dave and Amanda Lord of Wanafly and Irwin Baker of Sunbird Sky to offer microlight flight training on both fixed and flexwings.

It also has a large club whose members hire the company's aircraft for many epic group trips.

Sywell is a bustling GA field, with many interesting resident aircraft. On a typical day you'll see the resident Tiger Moths, the Blades Aerobatic Team with its Extra 300s, Aero Legends doing Spitfire rides or Ultimate Fighters doing rides in its two-seat P-51D Mustang, Spitfire IX or Buchon (Spanish-built Messer- ▷

Facing page
Final for grass runway 03R with Chris Theakstone in his EuroFox

- This page**
- 1 Alex and Paul meeting up with Eddie McCallum and Kev Waugh in the Aviator Hotel beer garden
 - 2 G-CEVS outside Aviator Hotel
 - 3 Jeff Bell, Sywell airfield manager

Back in the sky

by Rob Hughes, Chairman

IT'S been a busy time for the council, meeting online every couple of weeks to take the necessary but unwanted measures to ensure the BMAA



will continue to work for us all. Staff and council members have adapted well to this new routine, and I look forward to a more normal sense of "normal" sometime soon.

The Department for Transport released the "Go Fly" news just before the print deadline for this magazine, and it is thanks to the flexibility and professionalism of our MF team that the news was quickly shared via eMF and also in this issue.

We may not have been flying lately, but that has not stopped the flow of content. On behalf of us all, I thank Geoff Hill and the team for keeping the BMAA spirits up.

It's up to us now to promote our sport at this time by respecting others, not least airfield operators, and doing all we can to keep ourselves and those around us safe.

Regarding the merger talks with the LAA, I shared the collective BMAA disappointment as I read in my latest LAA magazine the reasons its chairman gave for unilaterally pulling out of talks. Along with our CE, I don't recognise the reasons given, but I'm pleased to report that LAA staff members continue to collaborate closely with us. Long may that remain the case.

Thank you for your support in the recent council elections. We welcome Ed McCallum to the council, and we presented outgoing council member Frank Thompson with a BMAA Certificate of Thanks for his contribution. We wish him well in the future. Now, let's go flying again... □

FROM THE CE'S DESK

Skeleton staff, full-fat service

Even with staff on furlough, the BMAA is representing you fully, says **Geoff Weighell**



ALTHOUGH we have had to furlough staff throughout April and into May, the work of representing members has continued.

Highest on every member's wish list has been the desire to get back into flying, after the general advice published by the Department for Transport that recreational flying didn't meet the lockdown movement and risk regulations. All powered airports agreed to advise members not to fly until a change in the advice. That

doesn't mean that we haven't challenged the principle – increasingly so, after the Prime Minister encouraged the public to get out more and enjoy sport.

On 15 May, the DfT allowed recreational flight in England to restart, then on 19 May Northern Ireland MLA Peter Weir confirmed after a query by local pilot Joe McCarrison that private solo flights can take place again. The DfT then confirmed that this decision was one for the Northern Ireland Executive.

Guidelines must be followed. Peter Weir said: "Private solo flights can therefore take place as long as it doesn't involve the sharing of hard surfaces, so people from different households aren't using the same equipment, planes etc."

That is a little different to the England position, which allows sharing flights with a member of your own household and no bar on sharing an aircraft. Nevertheless it is great news: our thanks to Joe McCarrison for making the initial contact and to Gary Loughran for bringing it to my attention.

The DfT guidance that allows recreational flight in England includes restrictions on aircraft occupancy – and notice that many airfields won't be open and some air traffic services won't be fully manned – but at least we can fly again.

Note, however, that at the time of writing the same does not apply in Scotland and Wales.

During the past weeks, we have also agreed with the CAA measures to extend the validity period of pilot licences, instructor certificates and examiner authorities for those individuals whose validity will expire due to the lockdown preventing flying to revalidate. A briefing is required to achieve the extension, and the details are all on the BMAA website in the Pilot Licensing section. All instructors have been sent guidelines for the conduct of the briefings for standardisation and will be able to help you stay valid.

As well as extending the validity of documents, we have negotiated with the CAA an extension to the validity of students' exams, so those who have been unable to complete their training due to the lockdown have a longer period before they might have to resit.

600kg: quietly confident

The work towards 600kg continues. We have had meetings with the CAA to review the results of the public consultation. It has taken some time for the CAA □



▷ schmitt Bf 109G with a Merlin engine replacing the Daimler Benz DB605). Indeed, Carolyn and Richard Grace and their team are based there with a warbird restoration and maintenance business, Air Leasing, and have notably recently restored four of the Buchons from the film *Battle of Britain* to airworthiness following more than 40 years of storage in Texas.

We bumped into our good mate Dave Puleston, one of the warbird engineers who also flies the aircraft in the magnificent collection.

"Understated Dave" I call him, as he's generally wandering around in flip-flops and always says he's jealous of our micro-light adventures despite often having just jumped out of a P-47 Thunderbolt, Spitfire or Hurricane.

One outstanding feature of Sywell is the on-site Aviator Hotel. Built in the 1930s, the Art Deco building once served as the Officers' Mess and now has 50 en-suite rooms including a number of twins, a good restaurant and a very well-stocked bar, all covered by free wi-fi to aid your planning.

Sywell is over two hours south from Eshott in the Eurostar, and as a result, a very handy stop-off when heading south on longer trips.

As a result, I've stayed at the Aviator many times, and there's nothing quite like parking at the door and going in for a few beers and a nice meal with your pals while looking out at your plane tied down for the night.

The restaurant is full of aviation memorabilia from Sywell's rich 92-year history and has a nice ambience with friendly staff. One gotcha worth noting is that the restaurant is closed on Sun-

day evening, which resulted in a takeaway pizza delivered to the bar on one previous trip.

Room rates are from £65 for a double and £92 for a twin, and the hotel has a 24-hour cancellation policy so you can get a refund if it looks like the weather will change.

During our January visit, a new hard taxiway was under construction from the fuel apron to the warbirds' blister hangars. The aerodrome manager, the ever cheerful and endlessly helpful Jeff Bell, tells me that another blister hangar will soon be constructed adjacent to the warbirds' hangars.

In the car park just outside the Aviator Hotel is the excellent Sywell Aviation Museum housed in a series of Nissen huts with a Hawker Hunter parked outside. The small museum is packed with interesting exhibits charting the history of Sywell and aviation in the local area since the First World War. It's open all day every weekend and bank holiday, and Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons between Easter and October.

After a quick refuel and food stop, we mounted up to depart for an overnight at Elstree.

I really like friendly Sywell. We've hosted many weekend Eurostar fly-ins there over the years – having a café, a hotel and a restaurant on site along with multiple runways and mogas on the pumps is so very hard to beat. Besides, you can watch the Spitfires come and go.

Once we get through the current crisis, I think I'll arrange to overnight there with my flying mates for a steak and a few large beers. That's going to be some party.

Maybe see you there... □

Airfield quiz answers, from p39

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1 Bruntingthorpe | 3 Skegness |
| 2 Leicester | 4 Old Buckenham |

Above

- 1 G-CEVS parked with the Grace two-seat Spitfire Mk IX
- 2 Ultimate Fighters dual control P-51D Mustang
- 3 Sywell Skyranger gang, (l-r) Chris Levings, Fly-UK supremo Mat Burnham and Alan Birt

Dedicated

▷ to go through the 1400 responses – more than any other consultation has attracted in its history. It's too early to say what the result will be at the moment, but I am quietly hopeful that microlighting will benefit as a result.

LAA: disappointing

I was disappointed to read a passage in the recent LAA magazine suggesting that the BMAA had not entered into the merger discussion with as much enthusiasm or openness as the LAA.

It would be easy to get into a he-said, she-said public slanging match, but that ultimately won't change the outcome, that the LAA unilaterally chose to walk away from discussions for the second time in my time working at the BMAA.

I will say that I don't recognise any of the reasons given within the LAA Chairman's article for the LAA withdrawal, and consider it extremely disappointing that once again the LAA has robbed the membership of both the BMAA and LAA of the opportunity to have a members' vote.

In any case, as staff members we continue to work well together without the shackle of politics, and ultimately that will remain a benefit to members.

It's good to talk

We have understood for a long time that communication with members is important, and even more so at the moment when most are isolated in one way or another.

I have been putting together a weekly newsletter to keep members up to date with what is happening. I will try to keep this up in the future, as it seems to be going down well. I have also hosted a couple of online meetings with members, which also seem to work well. I have plans to continue that and see how we can extend the scope in the future.

Return to Deddington

Now that some flying has resumed, I will be looking to see how I can reinstate staff to resume normal, or near normal, service.

With no flying, most of what has been needed has been handled well enough with just Karen and I manning the pumps.

We won't get all staff back straight away, but will look to see how we can economically manage any outstanding work, mainly technical projects.

Finally, keep well and stay safe. □



FLIGHT PLANS

CLUBS! Planning an event? Mail details to ghillster@gmail.com for inclusion in Flight Plans.

READERS! This list is subject to change after we go to press, due to the lockdown. Check with organisers before going anywhere!

19-28 Jun POSTPONED: MULTIPLE AIRFIELDS. **Fly-UK.** The annual event which tours the UK over the course of a week. See fly-uk.org.

20 Jun: SUTTON MEADOWS. **Cambridgeshire MC Fly-in.** Sunrise to sunset, barbecue, free bacon sandwich to first arrival, no landing fee. Details from Peter Robinson, 01353 778446 or 07799 545705, also cambsmicrolightclub.co.uk.

4-5 Jul: WOLVERHAMPTON AIRPORT. **Half-penny Green Open Skies.** Open Series Event. Details tba. Contact Mary Russell, mary.russell@tiscali.co.uk.

18-19 Jul: BEVERLEY AIRFIELD (EGNY). **Hull Aero Club Flyer Weekend.** Over 700m of superb grass, avgas and mogas available. Free landing, but please buy super food from refurbished Flyer Café. Non-radio and paramotors PPR please, otherwise 123.055 when 10min away. Info: 01964 544994 or hullaeroclub.co.uk.

24-26 Jul: ENSTONE. **BMAA Freedom Rally (SSDR).** A great social occasion, open to all microlights not just single-seat. More information later on bmaa.org.

22 Aug: SUTTON MEADOWS. **Cambridgeshire MC Middy Fly-in.** Barbecue, no landing fee.

Details from Peter Robinson, 01353 778446 or 07799 545705, also cambsmicrolightclub.co.uk.

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

12-13 Sep: SANDY. **Open Series Event.** Details tba. Contact Mary Russell, mary.russell@tiscali.co.uk.

18-19 Jul: BEVERLEY AIRFIELD (EGNY). **Hull Aero Club Flyer Weekend.** Over 700m of superb grass, avgas and mogas available. Free landing, but please buy super food from refurbished Flyer Café. Non-radio and paramotors PPR please, otherwise 123.055 when 10min away. Info: 01964 544994 or hullaeroclub.co.uk.

International events

13-19 Jun: FRANCE. **Franglais Friendly,** international friendly competition at Blois. Details tba from UK contact Rob Keene. Urgent questions to French organiser Noel Mazaudier, nmazaudier@ffplum.org.

21-23 Aug: AUSTRIA. **Rotax fly-in.** Demonstration flights at Wels airfield with the 912iS and 915iS engines, company tour of state-of-the-art BRP-Rotax factory in Gunsirichen, visit to a new exhibition celebrating company centenary, simulators, Q&A sessions and evening's entertainment with barbecue and live band. More details or register at fly-rotax.com.

29-30 Aug: FRANCE. **ULM Blois.** France's premier microlight and homebuilders' show. More info on ulm.blois.

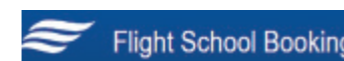
26 Jul – 1 Aug 2021 (2020-EVENT-CANCELLED): USA. **EAA AirVenture.** The biggest sport aviation show on earth, held annually at Oshkosh airfield, Wisconsin: <https://eaa.org/airventure>. □

New or re-registered microlights

G-reg	Aircraft type	Owner	Town
CLMH	Pipistrel Alpha	Fly About Aviation	Beccles
CLMI	Pipistrel Alpha	Fly About Aviation	Beccles
CLOU	Skyranger Nynja	Flylight Airsports	Northampton
CLPT	Ikarus C42 FB100	The Light Aircraft Co	Fakenham
JKSN	Skyranger Nynja 912S	Mark Hilton	Ashbourne
MVFT	Pegasus XL-R (modified)	Robert Edward Parker	Sawbridgeworth
NCDC	Skyranger Nynja 912S	Colin Douglas Church	Dorchester

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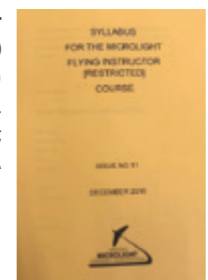


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Yes please! *MF* is a magazine for and largely by BMAA members, so the editor welcomes written and photographic contributions. In fact, if he didn't get any, he'd be out of a job! But before writing please take a look at the contributors' guidelines on bmaa.org/files/writing_for_mf.pdf.

Photos Always use your camera's highest settings. Email the editor only the original image file as downloaded from the camera, ideally as a jpg. It should be at least 1MB. No png files please! Also, if you wish to enter the photo competition, please read the rules on microlightflying.org.uk/photo-competition-rules.

Deadline (advertising and editorial) *MF* is published at the beginning of each month. Deadline is the third day of the preceding month. Urgent items can be published in *MF*'s associated on-line newsletter, *eMF*, see below.

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HOW TO GET MF

MF is not sold in shops, nor is it available on subscription. BMAA members receive it monthly free of charge as part of their membership services. For membership details, see below.

Back numbers of *MF* (subject to availability) and photocopies of flight tests may be purchased from the BMAA HQ at Deddington. Flight tests and back numbers from 1980-82 and 2009 onwards can also be accessed via bmaa.org.

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