



October Newsletter 2024

Welcome

Welcome to the October newsletter. I wonder how many of you have been considering selling the gyro and buying a boat with all the rain we've had?

This month we thought we'd experiment with a new format, so we'd be interested to hear your feedback. We thought it might be nice to have it as a more of a traditional magazine that you can print or view as a PDF. It also gives us more flexibility over the layout than the usual rather restrictive email creation tool.

This month we have our usual submission from Clive and his Rubber Side Down talking about his audio setup for flying.

Our committee member, Lawrence, takes us on a trip to Cardiff airport for a fly-in. I was intrigued by this as it involved filing a flight plan! Who knew that you sometimes need a flight plan to fly within the UK on a VFR flight!?

Steve Boxall is back again with a cautionary tale about starting your engine, and lessons we should take away from it.

And we have promising news for current, and future, single seat pilots and owners.

But first we start off with some sad news that Andy Hawes, a well known gyro instructor, has unfortunately passed away.

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Andy Hawes passes away

By Steve Paffett



Andy Hawes RIP

Another very sad and untimely passing of one of our communities well known Instructors. Andy Hawes sadly passed away in the early hours of October 3rd following an incredibly late diagnosis. Andy was very well liked by all who knew him, he will be very missed and we of course extend our condolences to his family and friends.

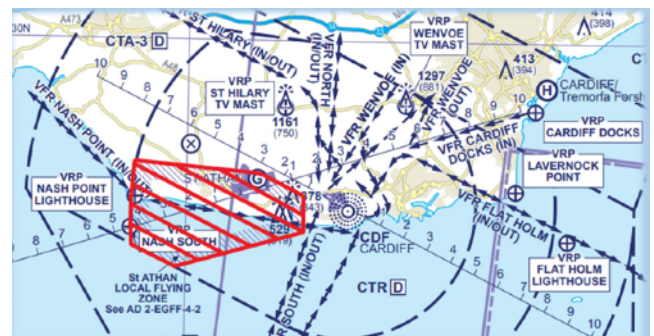
Flying into Cardiff

By Lawrence Spiller

My attention was grabbed by a post in Facebook group "Flyins UK" promoting the Cardiff Airport Fly-in on the weekend 12th and 13th October. I suspect like other Gyroplane pilots I am conscious that our flight profile doesn't fit well with other GA types and am afraid of being a nuisance. I did once fly into London Oxford when it was full ATC and apart from proving I could do it, I also confirmed that

I felt out of place. Emboldened by currently reading Norman Surplus's excellent book "First Gyro", I was ready to be more adventurous again.

Here I had an advertised GA fly-in wanting all types. I reasoned that holiday charters would be quite in October so maybe they were a bit bored. The winds were not favourable for the Saturday but the Sunday looked doable so I PPR'd by email as instructed. A bounce back gave me a weblink to a PPR website so I dutifully did so again. I got two replies to my email saying I had been accepted but neither attaching the promised VFR Fly-in instructions. I chased and they were sent.



The Cardiff airspace with VFR routes

Inbound they suggested a listing squawk on Bristol, then at forty miles out required me to listen to their ATIS then switch to their Radar that would make me hold at Cardiff Docks VFR before switching me to Tower for a Base Leg Join and final on Rwy 30.



Cardiff docks

With just one orbit needed which was good for photographs, I landed with an air taxi to exit at "Golf" where a "Follow-Me" van guided me to air-marshals who parked me up. I then purchased 20l Avgas from a bowser patrolling the line of parked GA aircraft and caught a free minibus to the GA Flying Club.



Final for Cardiff

The rules for departure where a surprise and new to me:

Departure Flight Plans

- All departing aircraft are required to file a full or abbreviated flight plan electronically prior to departure as per the UK AIP (EGFF AD 2.4)
- Requests to "book out" by telephone or RTF will be refused due to controller workload

SkyDemon (www.skydemon.aero)

- Has the option to automatically file a flight plan for a route
- Further details of how to do this are found in section 9 of the user manual

Flight plan instructions supplied with PPR for the fly-in

I explored my SkyDemon manual/apps and indeed found I could file a flight plan and thankfully my subscription included 20 such plans and more could be purchased. My first attempt failed as I needed to add the Colour of my aircraft to the Aircraft Information. I hoped the aircraft equipment was correct. I had forgotten my lifejacket so couldn't tick that box which excluded my planned departure via VFR Flat Holm Lighthouse across to the south of Bristol, Cardiff Docks was for VFR inwards only, so my next option was VFR Wenvoe Outbound. Keeping the TV mast (1297ft) to my Left hand side not above 1500 ft.

So I filed my Flight Plan and it gave my departure in 2.5 hours. It had to be filed using GMT and I had incorrectly adjusted from BST. Using SkyDemon "Manage Flight Plans" I cancelled it, correct the time and filed it again. There was an option to delay a departure but not to bring it forward. Two of my 20 had been used up.

The instructions said ATC had no control of the GA parking as it was classified as a "maintenance area". So I started my engine, listened to ATIS, and contacted Tower, there was no Ground channel, to request taxi. The wind had changed and we were now taking-off on Rwy 12. They asked if I wanted them to "Copy my flight plan". On reflection I assume this was because I was still taking-off fifteen minutes before my planned time but at the time I was confused and rather than saying "No write your own!" I simply said "yes". I also referred to a departure via "Wendover" which they corrected to "Wenvoe" but they still let me line-up. I had one GA flight queued behind me and a holiday jet waiting for both of us. I pre-rotated, and throttled away, turned crosswind early at the end of the runway and bolted for the VRP.



Takeoff from Cardiff

Sky Demon wasn't giving me the circuit pattern which I knew to be left hand on 12. Spewing out of the Control Zone still below 1500ft I realised how high the South Wales hills were. Did I mention the cloud was low and vis was

murky? Through the valleys the headwinds were stronger but once passing Newport it was a simple and enjoyable flight back home.



Hills around Cardiff

Having landed at my farm strip and put the plane to bed, then driven home to decompress with a cup of tea, I remembered that a flight plan needs to be closed. Sure enough, SkyDemon had a button for this, so I did it before I received any phone call or Search-and-Rescue Helicopter overhead. As this plan had been "copied" I don't know what its status was but there was certainly nobody at my airfield who would be acting on it.

A cautionary tale before starting your engine

By Steve Boxall

In December 2023 the AAIB issued a report on a fatal accident to a Pegasus Quick microlight G-CCPC which occurred on 1st June 2022. A summarised version of the AAIB summary is:

"During start up, the aircraft's engine suddenly went to a high rpm (revolutions per minute). The aircraft then accelerated over the ground and became airborne with the base bar attached to the front strut. It struck the ground

in a field adjacent to the airfield and the pilot died from head injuries eight days later.

It was likely the pilot started the engine with the hand throttle open and did not free the base bar, reduce the rpm or stop the engine before the aircraft became airborne. The pilot might have survived if he had been wearing his shoulder (diagonal) harness and his helmet had been designed to protect him from rotational head injuries."

There are some valuable learning points for gyroplane pilots from this accident.

- Every time you start the engine, have a plan for what you are going to do if the engine runs away. If the throttle cable breaks then a Rotax engine will default to full power and moving the throttle lever will make no difference; if you have a "senior moment" and manage to get the engine started with the throttle wide open, then your response will no doubt be to push the throttle open even harder in the mistaken belief that you are closing it. My pre-start brief is "if the engine runs away on startup then I am going to turn off the magnetos". Because I fly aircraft with both key-switches and toggles for the ignition I also mime the motion I am going to make in order to turn them off.
- Always, always have your seat belt fastened and your helmet on and secure before you start the engine, as you never know what might happen. I'm sure that the unfortunate pilot of the Quick in the accident above had not expected his day to end the way it did.
- Never start the aircraft without the pilot in it and secured; never get in or out of the aircraft when the engine is running.

Once in a while it's worth taking a step back and looking at how you operate your aircraft and say "I know I've never had a problem caused by doing this, but is it really safe?". If

you are not familiar with it then look up the concept of "the normalisation of deviance" and ask yourself where you may have allowed that to occur.

Single seater news

By Steve Paffett

Always have hope...

On Friday 23rd of September, the BRA's Single Seater (SS) group met with Francis Donaldson and Jon Viner at LAA HQ.

The meeting was primarily to introduce the group and offer its expertise to LAA Engineers and Inspectors.

Many valuable points were covered in this extensive meeting and both Francis Donaldson and Jon Viner were fully on board with the aims and goals of the group.

Training (or the lack of the ability to get any) was highlighted as one of the biggest issues, and of course, safety. None of us ever want to see a resurgence of accidents such as was seen back in the 70's and 80's.

With the advances made in designs and modifications to known good aircraft, such as the AV18 with extended tail and stabiliser, along with the new generation of rotor blades, it was felt that if we can push the authorities to agree a revised training syllabus for conversions, then conversions could be less of a hurdle in the future.

TADs for the known aircraft were also discussed at some length, and the LAA team were going to see what they could do to get this underway.

The other obvious issue is the lack of Instructors even prepared to stand alongside experienced SS pilots, let alone sign off a capable prospective SS pilot. Indeed following the sad loss of Tony Melody a few months ago, and then Andy Hawes just two weeks ago, the

whole instructor situation in the gyro community at large is of extreme concern.

Stability and condition is key, and with the group collectively advising future and existing inspectors on best practice and known issues, it was felt that aircraft would be inherently better checked before permits were issued.

It was unanimously agreed that these aircraft, and those that hopefully follow, should fly.

If you have any accounts of your own fairly recent experiences of trying to learn to fly a single seat gyro, then please email ssinfo@britishrotorcraftassociation.co.uk. We will be delighted to hear from you.

Those of you that are LAA members may also have seen in last month's LAA magazine that long standing BRA member, single seat pilot, and LAA inspector Robin Braithwaite, is now authorised to sign off "Build Stages" and "First Flights" for gyroplanes.

As most of you are aware things do not progress quickly in aviation, however we will endeavour to keep you more up to date with these issues.

Rubber Side down

By Clive Rose

In a slight departure I'd like to do a gear review this month. And I'd like to apologise in advance for using the phrase "Vaginal Dryness" in a Rubber Side Down column. Twice. In fairness it wasn't me who used it, but a lady in Boots. We'll get to that...

When you spend a lot of time in close proximity to a Rotax on full chat you'll be relieved when you transition from a MicroAvionics helmet to a FlyCom. Not only does the latter fit more snugly, it's way more comfortable and the audio sounds better.

But when you spend a lot of time in the back seat you'll start to explore options for mitigating the intrusive drone of your old friend 91x. The solution I use in front- and back seats marries in-ear headphones to a small rechargeable audio Amp. See photos below.

I started with a set of ACS Pro27 headphones. I found them good for listening to audio on the train or on commercial flights but they don't cut-out sufficient wind noise in an open cockpit, or on a motorbike. Then I upped-the ante with a more expensive set of Custom Fit Guard (CFG) headphones which are the biz!

I've tried a few Amps, too, but the ones I use now are compact, provide good charge life, double audio-out sockets and good quality audio. The 2nd audio-out can be used to give clear sound to your GoPro videos...

What you see below is my M-Audio Amps and my CFG in-ear headphones. Why two Amps? Always carry a spare! One of them did run out as my mate Lawrence (see his Cardiff trip write-up elsewhere in this newsletter) was announcing "Final 25" at Thruxton. It just took a few seconds to plug in the fully-charged spare I was carrying in the rear seat pocket.



M-Audio amps and CFG in-ear headphones

On each of the Amps you can see a volume control on the left and a sticky-up socket on the right. The sticky-up bit is a stereo-mono adapter which I've found resolves occasional loss of audio in one ear.

All these headphones, moulded to the shape of your outer ear, are designed to fit really snugly, so every so often you need to use the Ear Balm they provide to lube them up for an easy fit. Ear Balm doesn't last forever, though. So you may find yourself trotting off to buy more. When I explained to the lady in Boots what was required, she leant across the counter and explained their only product of that sort is designed for "Vaginal Dryness". This phrase delivered in a loud whisper with accentuated pronunciation, in case I was lip reading...

I know what you bunch are like so there was no way I was going to use that kind of product at an airfield with you looking on!

And so we move on to connectors. The Red lead, below, connects the 6.35mm GA jack behind my left shoulder (in you Magni front seat) to the 3.5mm Audio-in on the Amp. I use the Gold plug when I'm flying Magni back seat. This plugs into GA jack on the Magni rear dash. The Black 3.5mm-3.5mm lead connecting Gold plug to Amp.



Connectors

Finally, below is a photo of the device FlyCom supplied me before the company was sold. The black box plugs in to the Binder connector on your MTO. Your helmet plugs in to the other Binder. Which leaves a 3.5mm audio pig-tail (I think that's what it's called) you can plug in to your Amp or your GoPro. The other cable is a 3.5mm to Mini-USB adapter which gets audio in to your GoPro data port. Not all GoPros are created equal so do check if you're hoping to get clean audio into your camera.



Binder adaptor

All of the above allow me to get constant clear audio into my lug'oles so I'm not straining to hear over the drone of the Rotax or when my passenger's volume control is robbing power from my own. As we know, anything to reduce cockpit distraction gives us more bandwidth to keep things Rubber Side Down.

Upcoming events:

There are currently no official BRA events coming up. You can see the full events calendar on our website which includes all events, not just the official BRA ones, that we think you might be interested in. britishrotorcraftassociation.co.uk/events/

If you have any events you'd like added to our calendar, then please feel free to send an email to: events@britishrotorcraftassociation.co.uk

Keep checking back as we'll soon be adding new official BRA events for 2025!

For Sale:

For Sale my immaculate Everett Cricket, completely rebuilt 2017-18 and in permit since. Super stable and trims hands off, the most fun gyroplane you will ever fly.

Rotax 582, full rebuild by Eccleston Aviation with a new crankshaft 60 hours ago
2.24:1 "B" Gearbox, 145kg thrust with 52" GSC Tech3 prop
22' Dragon Wings rotors
M5 starter with lithium battery
Lovegrove keel mounted stick
200+rpm Wunderlich Prerotator
MOD 11127 Horizontal Stabiliser
MPD 2005-08 cleared for training, no restrictions
ICOM A6 radio

New permit end Sep 25 and will include a Trailer if required., more details and images at <https://afors.com/aircraftView/62598>

£12,500

Contact: Pat Gardner patg679@gmail.com 07891 517553

