



►►► Summer 2018 Newsletter

- ▶ Quantum upgrade
- ▶ Don't tax your PAX
- ▶ HypeR Down Under



Flexwing trike advantages

Compared to conventional three-axis aircraft

- ▶ Straightforward, fully inspectable structure, maintainable and repairable simply by fitting replacement parts. Unlike complex enclosed structures, a trike structure gives excellent visibility, so maintenance issues can be spotted early.
- ▶ Foldable for transport, low-cost hangarage or storage (especially strutted wings, which can be folded on the trike in a couple of minutes).
- ▶ No moving control surfaces and two-axis control = efficient, simple to use and very reliable.
- ▶ Low maintenance costs compared with fixed-wing aircraft.
- ▶ Weight-shift pitch control enables a lift coefficient of almost 2.0, giving low stall speeds and wide speed ranges without any additional complexity like flaps.
- ▶ Relative freedom from CG constraints simplifies loading considerations, as the CG of the trike only affects the suspended attitude.
- ▶ No fuselage, empennage, control surfaces or doors means reduced cost and weight, allowing the aircraft to carry more than its own weight in payload.
- ▶ No possibility of spinning.
- ▶ Unparalleled pilot and passenger view, a totally immersive flying experience. A feeling of freedom like a high-performance 3D motorcycle.
- ▶ Great low-vibration camera platform.
- ▶ Direct control of wing lift for landing and take-off. Gives excellent gust handling as you can change the angle of attack as soon as you land. Also allows variable touchdown speeds to match flying conditions.
- ▶ Pusher layout removes the pilot from the slipstream and minimises vibration.
- ▶ Ideal for take-off from unprepared and short strips, hence low operating costs.
- ▶ Better situational awareness when doing precautionary or forced landings, thanks to fantastic all-round visibility.



COVER PHOTO: Tigers are not native to Australia, but this one is. Read about the first HypeR Down Under on p14

THIS PHOTO: Jim Crosby enjoying the skies over Scotland

Chairman's Chunterings

New trikes for old



However, after her first ever flexwing flight, she was suitably impressed and confessed that she really enjoyed it!

Also, on the subject of this year's wonderful Popham, we carried out our normal customer feedback survey and there is clearly a demand for upgrades across the current range of aircraft, so we will be working on those in due course.

We are already offering an upgrade service for wiring and instrument installations to ensure that everything works safely, for example by installing circuit breakers and additional systems such as Pilot Aware or Sky Demon on an iPad.

We also now have a comprehensive range of branded clothing (these will be promoted on our Facebook page), not forgetting our "fly flexwing" mugs to make those cuppas more enjoyable!

After so many miserable summers, the current run of glorious flying weather is most welcome and the team wishes you all safe and enjoyable flying during the coming months.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Crankfield". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'A' at the beginning.

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QUANTUM LEAP

It started off as a trip to the factory for some repair work on his Quantum, but **Colin Russell** ended up with an upgraded and reinvigorated machine

On arrival at the P&M airstrip at Manton, having set off 4h before in my Quantum 912 from Perranporth, I was warmly welcomed (as always) by Andrew Cranfield.

My aircraft was due in for some repair work, originally arranged back in November 2017, but when I delivered it P&M divulged that an upgrade programme for the Quantum was in development, dubbed Quantum Leap.

"Would I like a flight in the prototype Quantum Leap 582?" Andrew asked. The timing wasn't perfect as it was about 3pm and my return train to Cornwall was due at 16.38 from Pewsey. However, there was no way I was going to miss a flight opportunity with Dr Bill Brooks! After a good preflight check over and the heads up from Bill, we both suited up and I jumped into the front seat. Bill explained the new mods and we taxied to the top of the hill for a trial flight.

The Quantum Leap 582 had an impressive new trim range, excellent wind protection and enhanced cruise speed – I was quietly impressed. Back to Manton, and landing with the Flying Guru in the back seat focuses the mind, but I got back down safely, doing a good landing in the process.

Left The super new screen and snazzy Quantum Leap logos finish off the aircraft nicely; and (right) looking good for years to come





► We then had a quick discussion over the options for my 912 as I was given a rather rushed lift to the station. It didn't take much to persuade me to "lend" my Quantum to P&M to use as the first approved upgrade for a Quantum Leap 912 and get the modifications approved. As the 582 and

To me it seems to be a no-brainer: if you love your Quantum like I do, anything you spend will be an investment on the resale value anyway!

912 are different beasts (for a start, the props turn opposite ways), it was necessary to do trial mods on a 912 machine to ensure that the proposed mods did not create any adverse affects. I do know that there was particular concern, within P&M, to ensure that the renowned handling of the Quantum didn't become degraded.

The factory then set to work with my machine, doing the repairs and mods as well as completing the approvals process. With everything eventually approved, a letter was then sent out to all Quantum owners on the UK register, outlining all the upgrade options. To me it seems to be a no brainer: if you love your Quantum like I do, anything you do spend will be an investment on the resale value anyway! Andrew explained that because some of the mods come under the category of major modifications, it means they must be fitted at the factory as well as test flown by P&M.

My Quantum is now back at Perranporth and I've flown several flights, trialling the new mods, and have clocked up 3h so far. As Quantum flyers will know, the original trim system gives a range of about 6mph; the Leap, however, now has an operating range of 25mph. This works very nicely for me as a lot of my flying is local around Cornwall and my hands-off trim speed is now 50mph at 3500rpm, which is lovely for scenic flying. The new A-frame and kingpost aerofoil sections save 6hp

at cruise which will reduce fuel consumption and increase range; they also look great!

On the practical side, the new quick-release screen is a doddle to get on and off, which aids dropping the wing and offers much improved protection. I can now fly comfortably with my visor up and my passengers too have noted better protection.

The front and rear flying cable attachment points have been raised so they no longer catch the screen, which allows for safer tie-down and prevents damage to the screen edge. The cable lengths have also been changed to take the bar out slightly, so that the aircraft can be trimmed to fly at 70mph hands-off trim with the bar in a comfortable position.

In addition, the static vent has been repositioned to improve the accuracy of the ASI over the operating speed range.

So, it appears that the upgrades deliver the benefits promised. I am really pleased with G-CDIL and her new mods, she is flying wonderfully!

I trained in G-CDIL with Gary Prisk of Cornwall

Microlights and have owned her for over two years. This upgrade option is perfect for me, as it enables me to keep up with other flexwings in a cost-effective manner. With new sailcloth fitted a year ago, my Quantum is now good for another 10+ years and can hang onto the coat tails of the later models in the P&M range.

Planned trips this year include a flight from Perranporth to Alderney in the Channel Islands for a couple days in June, several trips to the Isle of Scilly (only 45min from Perranporth) and hopefully a flight to Wales for a few days camping.

I will continue to film my flights and upload short videos of my flying endeavours, as I am really keen to capture the fun of flying and to help promote flying to the younger crowds. Check out my YouTube channel (C Russell) and well done P&M for giving the Quantum a new lease of life. ■

Above Trimmer with bigger handle and the A-frame upright Mylar fairings (left); and the author's new and very smart Quantum in her native habitat at Perranporth (right)

Don't tax your PAX

By Anne McLean of P&M Aviation Australia

You love your husband, (wife, son, brother, friend etc), who has gained their licence and is now a pilot. You are proud of their achievement, but now they want you to be their PAX (passenger) and this involves moving through invisible air, above your familiar terra firma! You trust them, but they want you to totally put your life in their newly capable hands, and in circumstances under which you have absolutely no control.

Yes, you want to fly with your new pilot, but, is it wise? What about the other people in your life who depend on you? What about your own life and activities? What if...?

As a long term pax, of a very capable pilot of over 30,000h and well over 100 different types of flying machine, there may be a few things that I can help with.

I had flown only three times when I was asked to be a PAX in an aircraft with my new partner. My idea of flying was to get from one position on the ground to another destination. What was this "fun" component all about?

I took the plunge, and, together we have created many, many wonderful memories together. But it wasn't all plain (pardon the pun) sailing to begin with!

At first I was involved in a lot of aerial film work



from helicopters, Skyship 600, a Cessna, a Zling aerobatic aircraft, a C-47, a BAe 125-800 series private jet, and a P3C Orion, where I was working alongside my partner. On many flights, other pilots were in control of the aircraft, but under his direction. During these activities I lost any fear I may have had about actually flying.

So fear of flying was not an issue. Indeed, over the years I have found that fear of flying, and also fear of heights (I still can't even deal with standing on a chair!), usually aren't the problem encountered by passengers. It's fear of the unknown. Let me explain...

When we bought our first trike during the '90s, we were flying from a private airstrip in a valley where a large gumtree grew alongside the landing strip. Sometimes when we landed, it was really bumpy as we passed the tree, and other times it was very smooth.

My chauffeur, my pilot, understood the physics of it all and expected that I would too... Was it my pilot causing my uneasiness? No! I just didn't understand what was happening. One day I asked him why it was bumpy sometimes and not others. The answer was simple and easily explained – if you had the knowledge. It depended on the wind direction, and whether the wind passed through the disruptive tree before it crossed the airstrip as

“Neither fear of flying nor fear of heights is the problem usually encountered by passengers. It's fear of the unknown...”

we were landing, or whether it crossed the landing strip before it was disrupted by the tree shape.

I remarked that a bit of information like that would not only make me feel more comfortable, but would also take some of the mystery and uncertainty out of flight from a passenger's point of view. I became aware that the protector of my life was dealing with bits of information and not just luckily rescuing me when unseen things manifested themselves to scare me. Just as in a car, holding the steering wheel can be much more confidence-building than sitting in a seat with no control of outcomes.

Another day, the remark came from the pilot, "Did you see those kangaroos?" Well, of course I didn't, my eyes were tightly shut, because we were heading for the ground! You know, that "controlled crash" that pilots call "landing". My pilot hadn't given a thought to how I might feel about that.

After that we had a lot of "please explains" and

“Never land in a paddock with one “cow” in it, if the paddock next door has a herd of cows. The single “cow” is likely to be a bull and he won’t appreciate your noisy arrival...”

I became more and more comfortable as a pax. Over time, I learned many pearls of wisdom – dark patches (bitumen roads, burnt paddocks etc) give you “free lift”, but canola paddocks cause “sink”! Never land in a paddock with one “cow” in it, if the paddock next door has a herd of cows. The single “cow” is likely to be a bull and he won’t appreciate your noisy arrival.

Mother nature doesn't create dead straight shadows, but manmade structures do (powerlines, masts etc). You can tell the direction and strength of wind from all sorts of clues like smoke, wind on water etc. Hot, sunny days with clear blue skies are *not* the best time to fly, if you are flying for fun. If you can see a horizon, you have a way out of weather...

Now I am addressing pilots...

If you want a happy pax, sharing your passion, making memories together, make it easy for your pax to have confidence in your piloting skills by talking to them about what you are doing, how to make correct communications and why radio is so important. Teach your passenger how to scan correctly, because an extra pair of eyes is never wasted. Ask for simple assistance – for example, “Can you look out for XYZ for me, please?”

It is comforting to observe a careful preflight check, and hear a pre-landing check, or a practice run for a radio call, and, if you have a high workload in the cockpit, don't be afraid to request, “No more conversation at present please, as I am busy”. Your PAX may have no desire to become a pilot, but planning flights together, if you both have knowledge of your aircraft needs, and have an idea of what the weather is doing and how not to get lost, is very rewarding.

When you are flying together, think about the comfort of your pax. It may be fun to hotdog when you are alone, but not with a pax if he or she is not given a heads-up! Explaining discomforts *before* they may occur ticks your passenger's boxes, big time... If the discomfort doesn't eventuate, you've proved that at least you had considered the possibility, and were ready to deal with it.

I still have no desire to become a pilot, and never will, but I have taken part in my pilot's passion. It has been a joy to be a real part of his flying journey, and for as long as my geriatric legs are capable of being helped into a trike seat, I will continue to enjoy the earth from above with him, (preferably in excellent flying weather, please!)

I have probably flown several thousand (unlogged) air hours now, and I feel extremely privileged. Strangely, I have noticed the different



feel of each design advance in our newly acquired trikes over the years, and lately I love flying in "my" new HypeR tiger!

So, pilots, be kind and considerate to your pax, and pick a good time to introduce them to your passion of leaving the ground below. And nervous potential pax, discuss this flying passion with your pilot and learn a few facts, then give it a go.

Flying together makes the best memories. You may learn to love it as much as I do. ■



Falling in love again

Ashley Carr on how his confidence plummeted at the same time his machine did, and his journey back to the skies

As someone who rarely finds a spare minute during the day, I probably didn't pick the most time-compatible hobby. After all, microlight pilots know that finding a weather window that matches your availability can be a challenge.

However, as I'm sure my fellow pilots will agree, the feeling of being 1000ft from the ground, away from the hustle and bustle of daily life, is not like anything else, and when you do get the opportunity you jump at the chance. Even if that means waking up with the sparrows.

Unfortunately my view was very much tainted after my trusted Mainair Blade 912 decided to give up on me following a low pass over Silverstone racing circuit. Engine failure during a climb out at around 300ft forced me to put all my training into practice very quickly to execute an emergency landing in a car park and narrowly avoid a serious incident. Though I landed safely, I was completely shaken by the whole experience and it knocked my – along with my family's – confidence in microlights.

It proved to me that although the machines and the hardware go through our own preflight before takeoff, along with services, test flights and annual inspections, when you're flying an older machine there is always an element of uncertainty. And when things don't go according to plan, it can send your confidence into a tailspin until you no longer feel like defying gravity at all.

As a combination of skill, practice and confidence, flying definitely gets better with time and experience in the air, but when you start consciously cutting back your hours because of a knock to your confidence – looking for that ever

narrower set of perfect conditions – it impacts the other factors drastically, including that much-needed practice and skill.

With the engine replaced, I managed to get in the air again, but it was always with fear and trepidation of what might fall off, break, or stop working mid-flight. Things just weren't the same any more: I still had a constant eye on the weather forecasts, but instead of looking forward to a 6am trip to the airfield when the right weather struck, I was left doubting and wondering "why am I doing this?"

I had a decision to make: was my concern a lack of courage, or skill, or faith in the machine?

My thinking brought into sharp focus other issues that the Blade 912 had before the engine failure, which I used to brush to one side for the love of flying. I began looking at the machine in a very different way and noticing all the flaws. It handled poorly in anything but flat calm weather conditions, and it felt like I was always wrestling with the wing to get it back under control after a bump in the air; it had gone from my dream hobby to something that I felt was showing its age (a bit like me!).

So which one was lacking – courage, skill, or the machine? I was pretty sure I could still fly, and courage would come back, wouldn't it? So I chose to do something about the machine. A replacement was needed – something that would change the flying dynamics and renew my confidence in the machine itself.

I bit the bullet and decided to buy a new QuikGTR from P&M Aviation. A quick test flight in the new machine with the boys at P&M was not conclusive at first – though in sub-optimal

conditions the topless wing absolutely transformed the handling for the better.

But now there was trim to change and a closer eye on approach speeds to manage: the Blade was very forgiving in that respect, the QuikGTR less so. However, overall it significantly changed how the machine felt in the air, particularly the way it handled the thermal bumps, and each phase of flight was so much better. My confidence was restored almost immediately – I could actually still fly, and I was enjoying it!

Why am I telling this story? Because unfortunately it appears flying flexwing microlights is a dwindling sport with an ageing demographic. And as older machines often seemingly have a narrower flying window, hours drop off and confidence wanes. Then all that is needed to challenge the owner's confidence is an event of some kind. The risk then is that the pilot will give up altogether.

It's understandable. Flying an old microlight is akin to driving an old car, though instead of being able to pull over when there's an issue and have a cup of coffee while waiting for the AA to come and sort it out for you, you're mid-air at 1000ft with the ever-present, unforgiving ground beneath you.

It's a great shame that so many give up flying in this way, and I urge pilots considering surrendering their wings, or perhaps more appropriately the heated suits and gloves, to explore renewing their love by upgrading to a more modern machine with



"I urge pilots considering surrendering their wings to renew their love by upgrading to a modern machine that takes away that niggling worry of reliability"

better flying characteristics, and one that takes away that niggling worry of reliability. The very last thing you need to be thinking about as a pilot is whether the machine you are sat in is up to the task – there's all that pilot stuff you need to be doing instead.

My love for flying has been rejuvenated and although I was concerned that my new hotship – with all its bells and whistles – would be difficult to master, I have found it relatively simple and a wonder to fly in. It has much quicker responses and the wing is much easier to handle following a bumpy patch. My courage has returned and, more importantly, I'm back in the air and my weather operating window is expanding again rather than contracting.

I've got my confidence back!

Birth of a big cat



By Peter McLean of P&M Aviation Australia

After flying P&M Aviation aircraft for about a year, my wife Anne and I ordered a number of aircraft from the factory. One of these was the PulsR. We love flying the PulsR around, and it was massive leap forward in trike technology. So when we heard that Dr Bill Brooks was in the loft at the factory designing something new, we were very keen to see it.



The prototype was released at the Popham show in May 2016. It looked great in the photos, with its chisel nose with landing lights mounted inside. I liked this idea, but apparently UK pilots didn't. I told the design team that the British pilots shouldn't take priority because they probably wouldn't buy the aircraft anyway... However, the nose was changed to the more traditional rounded shape we see today.

Once we could see that production was going to go ahead, Anne and I decided to place an order for the first machine off the line, in February 2017. We knew there was still development going on, but this was not a problem as we were confident that with Dr Bill Brooks at the helm, the HypeR would be an outstanding aircraft.

We watched each week as changes were made to make the HypeR an even better aircraft than the original design. After a year had gone by, our HypeR was getting ready to be shipped to us at Yarrawonga in Australia. By now we had a number of aircraft on order, so when the day came, and the HypeR and two other trikes were loaded into a shipping container ready for the sea voyage.

Anne and I watched the shipping tracker as our container came ever closer to Melbourne. It finally arrived over a month later, after a number of delays. Next came customs, and don't forget quarantine, but the one we didn't think would give us a problem was border security. However the factory test pilot, bless his heart, must have gone



through the UK equivalent of the USA Top Gun school as he'd written on one of the documents "MG" which stands for Military Grade – jokingly meaning that the aircraft flew as well as a military machine. So border security got all excited about what might be in our shipping container. This held up our delivery for another week, while they investigated the goods to discover what the Military Grade threat might be! You have to laugh about it, but it really tests your patience...

Finally the container was on its way from the docks to our base at Yarrawonga. The shipping company informed us it would arrive at 10am, and true to their word, the truck rolled in on time, but we only had 30min to get three aircraft out of the container so the truck could get to Albury for its next pickup. I had the container emptied in 20min and then the truck was gone.

Landside was now a mess of fuselages, wings, and boxes. All the components of the three aircraft had to be moved into Hangar One, so I could start putting them together for the registration process. Luckily I had moved our other aircraft out of Hangar One and secured them in

This page, from top Going, going, gone... Acres of bubble wrap proved a temporary frustration, but finally a beautiful aircraft was revealed

Facing page Everything in its right place: the instrument panel fitted together perfectly



Hangar Two the day before. Half a day later all the new aircraft were under cover and the real work could begin.

It was a task and a half just to get the bubble wrap off the aircraft and the wings. I could just imagine everyone in the factory painstakingly covering every part of the aircraft to protect them on their sea voyage to Australia. Now here I am ripping off all their carefully secured protective layers in a rush to get to the aircraft. Finally, there they were, three beautiful aircraft, including the one that Anne had been waiting for – the HypeR. What a beautiful looking aircraft stood before us!

Everything was just as we wanted it. The instrument panel was perfect, just as I'd planned it. Sitting in the pilot's seat, everything was just as I had envisaged. I fitted the Trig radio and transponder – holes cut just in the right position! – and mounted the Garmin Aera 660 on the right side of the panel, it fitted like a glove.

Next was the wing. Once again, P&M Aviation have created a great design. It went together in less than 15min, the hardest part was putting the registration numbers on. Once the wing was on the base, you could really appreciate the beauty of the design. Without flying the HypeR you could tell, just by looking at the aircraft, that a lot of thought had gone into it. I'd already read a lot of the technical information that Bill had sent me and I knew this was going to be one very special aircraft.

The next wait would be for the registration to come through. I had most of the paperwork and data package ready, before the aircraft had arrived. Once I had the last parts completed I could send it

 You can tell, just by looking at the aircraft, that a lot of thought had gone into it

into the regulator. I sent an e-copy of the full data package in on the Saturday, and was very surprised to receive an email on Monday to say that the package was all in order and the office would be processing the registration later that day. I had the registration paperwork back before last light. Wow! – that was quick... and thanks to Brett and Melinda for such a great job.

So on Tuesday it was time to test fly this awesome machine. The HypeR is very roomy, so getting in and out is no problem, and the seats are very comfortable – the PulsR has the same type. I turned the key and the instruments came to life, our Tiger was alive! With a push of the starter, the Rotax 100hp engine kicked in, quieter than I expected, and smoother too.

I turned on the radio and transponder, then the nav and strobe lights, then the GPS and TCAS as well. All were working as they should. The temperature was coming up and so was the wind. I was hoping for a calm day but this was not to be:





► the wind was now 10kt and crosswind, just what I needed for a first flight.

I gave my calls and backtracked down runway 01. At the end of the runway I turned around and came to a stop. Last-chance checks I told myself. Everything was a goer.

I applied the power and the Hyperr Tiger lunged forward down the runway. It didn't take long to get to 50kt, I gave the bar a little push forward and away we went, climbing like a homesick angel. The climb rate was impressive: I was climbing at 1500ft/min at only 4000rpm.

I climbed to 5000ft and levelled off. It was time to see what the Hyperr could do. After 20 minutes of throwing the Hyperr around at all angles and speeds I came to the conclusion that this is one hell of a great aircraft. All you have to do is think about where you want to go and the Hyperr will go there.

Time to land this awesome aircraft. I pulled the power back and re-trimmed the Hyperr for a 500ft/min descent. Down we went, and with the circuit in sight I re-trimmed the Hyperr for landing. In the landing phase the Hyperr is just like the rest of the P&M's aircraft, once you set them up for the approach they just fly down onto the runway. The landing was just as I expected, and very smooth.

“All you have to do is think about where you want to go and the Hyperr will go there”

My next job, a very pleasant one, was to give PAX One the flight of her life. After all, Anne is actually the proud owner of the Hyperr, (or that's what she likes to tell everyone!).

She immediately decided that the comfort factor was A1 – the adjustable seats are a winner – and the take-off was something else, with a fantastic climb rate. Anne loved her first flight, so the next was to the Tocumwal aero club for breakfast. This has been followed up by a number of other flights: Anne is back to being my PAX One, which means the Hyperr is going to be seen a lot more around the airspace in Australia.

Some people say that trikes, in general, are becoming far too expensive, but P&M fully certifies its products, which is an extremely expensive task in itself. In the overall picture, we at Yarrawonga Flight Training believe that a fully certified aircraft is a good insurance to help prolong your life expectancy. Expensive cars are considered to be normal, yet many pilots want to short change their life expectancy in a cheap flying machine. Go figure!

I think that the PulsR is a great aircraft and reckon the QuikR is still one of the best training aircraft I have flown. The Hyperr is just the next generation in trikes. And I like the direction trikes are taking. ■



Have trike, will travel

By Mike Raza

Today was a beautiful morning. The air was butter smooth and other than some haze it was a perfect morning.

Since visibility was not the best to the north, I was just practising in the pattern. I had just done a touch and go and was climbing at 900ft/min and decided to take a selfie for my Facebook page. The first one was not great so I took a second one; that one would work fine, I decided.

I am always amazed by the stability of the Quik GT450, especially in the morning hours when I usually fly. As that thought crossed my mind I remembered that I owed Andrew Cranfield an article for the P&M Newsletter. I guess he remembered too, because this

Left Mike Raza in the cockpit, where he loves to be



▶ morning I had a message on Facebook reminding me.

I could spend the next couple of pages writing on the greatness of the Quik line of aircraft and how wonderful they are, but you already know this, that's why you're reading the P&M Newsletter. What I want to focus on is the purpose and use of P&M aircraft, something that is being missed here in the US and elsewhere.

To look at this topic I have to start at the beginning of my flying, eight years ago. I had finally reached the point in life where I could begin my aviation hobby and like many Americans

“I didn't aspire to be an instructor or a professional pilot – I just wanted to fly. So I quit my flight training”

I ended up in the left seat of a 1969 Cessna 172K, at a local airport with an older flight instructor, Kerwin, trying not to throw me out of the plane for that last really bad landing.

This is a common situation many new pilots encounter: they want to fly and naturally assume that jumping into a Cessna is the way to go. I was finally starting to get a feel for the plane, as best a new student

could, when Kerwin did one of the best things anyone has done for me in aviation. We were on the downwind at PDK airport and he asked me what I wanted to do with aviation. My response was, I do not know, I just want to fly around.

He reminded me that these planes are very expensive and require a lot of time and maintenance. He pointed out that most of his students moved on to become instructors or professionals and later that day he would introduce me to a lady who transports medicine for local practices.

I did not have those aspirations, I just wanted to fly. So I quit my training.

I remembered seeing paragliding in Germany and wondered if there was training here in Georgia. This led me to Luis Rosenkjer, an internationally recognized paraglider pilot and



owner of a school 50 miles north of Atlanta.

I would end up losing four years to paragliding, travelling the world searching for places to make circles in thermals for hours. I could try to describe thermalling a paraglider but I cannot, it is something very special.

Luckily my wife and career supported this. Luis would say I am still lost to paragliding, with my paraglider joining me on an upcoming business trip. But, as rewarding as paragliding is, you need mountains or large areas to tow launch. Without this, you cannot reach the thermals and Georgia does not provide these resources. This is especially true after the local tow site closed and a popular mountain site was adopted by the township for other uses.

This led me to paramotoring, known as powered paragliding

“As rewarding as paragliding is, you need mountains or large areas to tow launch. Without this, you cannot reach the thermals”

here in the US. With a small two-stroke motor on my back I could launch from any open field and fly around. The addition of power allowed me to retain my paragliding skills between thermal flights, as long as I maintained my ground handling skills too.

But to be honest, paramotoring can be boring for a thermal pilot. Paragliders are slow – even the fast ones – and

this limits the distance they can travel under power. Without the challenge of thermalling you are just flying in a straight line at 25-28 mph, if that. They are fun in large fields where you can fly close to the ground and drag your feet and they are fantastic in groups, where a flock of paramotorists can fly together around the area.

This brings me to trikes. A friend that has a P&M Quik, and who'd earlier told me that I would not like the limits of paramotoring, introduced me to Tony Castillo who owns P&M's American importer, P&M USA. Tony has a P&M Quik R, and after a couple flights in the back seat I was hooked.

This was the next step in my flying experience. I had the direct communication with the wing that I enjoyed from paragliding, but in the Quik, unlike a paramotor, I could actually go



► someplace. So I contacted Trevor Sayer and began my training.

However, at this point I started for the first time to lose my way. Like many people in the US I thought the price of the Quik was too high and instead bought a second-hand trike with a Rotax 503 and a more minimum design.

After a year with this trike, and having not completed my training, I quit trikes and only flew paragliders and paramotors. With a cruising speed of 45-50mph, my trike was not fast enough to go anywhere and did not allow me to travel between the local airports.

My home airport has four other airports within 25 miles, all with 3500-5000ft (1050-1500m) paved runways and if there were

any winds aloft my 503-powered trike would not make it in good time. Plus the wing has certain handling traits I did not enjoy, such as a Dutch roll on any approach over 50mph.

It was at this point that Trevor bought a Quik GTR and decided to sell his Quik GT450. The GT450 was the first trike I had flown from the front seat (actually, more a passenger, with Trevor flying from the back seat). After discussions with my wife I did a test flight with Trevor and I guess my training paid off. I found that I could fly and land the GT450, but also to my surprise that it was easier to fly than my own trike.

After paperwork and money, the 503-powered trike was gone and I was the owner of a Quik GT450. Shortly after that I finished my training.

I have now owned the GT450 for almost two years and fly it

almost every week, early in the morning when the air is calm and the sun is not too strong.

I often fly between local airports: my normal flight is to the airport on the Georgia and South Carolina border, then a stop for a soda at another airport and then the trip home. All this takes place over 1.5-2h – that's what a 76-80mph cruising speed provides.

But, the Quik is not my only form of aviation. I continue to regularly fly paramotors and here and there I paraglide off mountains. Paramotoring provides that low and slow engagement with the environment and nothing thermals like a paraglider.

I have realized that one aircraft cannot support all "missions". A paramotor does not thermal easily or launch from a mountain, a paraglider does not cover distance quickly

and lands without thermals, and you cannot pack the Quik in a backpack and take it on trip. By having all three I have my all my bases covered for aviation activities.

This also provides a justification for the price of the Quik, because it provides me with the capability to go places that other forms of flexwing or recreational aviation cannot. Also, the Quik provides a very stable platform to enjoy the flight and take in the view, an advantage that people who question the value of the Quik do not understand.

This is best illustrated by a recent flight I had with Blake, a paramotor instructor. It was an early flight and we were flying up to an airport 25 miles away and then along the mountains. I had the trim and hand throttle set for 3200ft ASL and 76mph. I decided to take some pictures and told

"Most Americans place all flexwings in the same category as hang gliders, paragliders and paramotors"

the Quik just flew straight and I resumed taking pictures. Blake was blown away by the stability. I told him, this is what you get with a flexwing like this and what many people do not understand. Most Americans place all flexwings in the same category as hang gliders, paragliders and paramotors and do not realise the capabilities of the higher-cost models.

The Quik is designed to go someplace in a comfortable, stable manner with the same freedom as a general-aviation aircraft like a Cessna.

This "mission" is what the Quik fulfils for me, a mission that paragliders and cheaper, less-capable flexwings cannot achieve. It gives me complete freedom to lose myself in the north Georgia airspace, bounce around between airports, take in the views (and take pictures), and then return me home safely. ■

QuikRs on skis in Canada (photo: Richard Hudon)



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