

P&M Aviation[®]

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Chairman's Chunterings

A warm summer, and a very busy one



By the time you read this it will be 2019, the weather will be wintry and in all probability the whole Brexit issue will be continuing to confound and confuse. So perhaps it is time to reflect on the somewhat happier, and warmer, times that we enjoyed during the best summer flying weather for quite a while.

It is also a good time to review what has been going on within P&M Aviation over the last four months or so, as not all of our efforts are immediately apparent to our customers, even though most of our activities are actually geared to improving customer service or developing upgrades for the existing range of aircraft.

As mentioned previously, we are talking more to owners to better understand their needs, and that is providing the focus for a lot of our efforts.

As well as continuing to build new aircraft, we have also completed our first "total upgrade", with a customer supplying a 912UL and instruments for his brand new QuikR, which he is delighted with. There continues to be strong interest in this option, which is encouraging.

There is also a steady stream of Quantums coming in to be upgraded to Leap specification. Some owners are even going the whole hog and fitting aerofoil undercarriage struts, spinners, engine covers and so on, which surprised us a bit but shows how much owners are clearly devoted

to their aircraft. As one told us "I have a Steen Skybolt, Auster, Thruster and Quantum but the one that's the most fun is the Quantum!" Can't argue with that, really.

We have developed and launched a handling upgrade for the GTR which has been received well and is being steadily adopted across the fleet. There will be further value for money upgrades, in due course, for the GTR and the other aircraft, with a focus on range, comfort and performance.

It is pleasing to see that the wiring and panel upgrade service is also proving popular.

To help all our customers benefit from these upgrades we are now offering a collection and delivery service for aircraft across the UK.

We continue to work hard on improving our internal systems and that is beginning to bear fruit in helping us make our operations more effective. As a result, the team have processed over 160 engineering changes over the last eight months. Most of these relate to internal process but a significant number are small product improvements, such as beading to help prevent the seat belts chaffing on the pylon fairing. Hopefully these changes will help eliminate some of the more common annoying niggles.

We are also offering a level of bespoke graphics design on the composites – just let us know what you want we and we will see if we can do it. In

addition we are embroidering some designs into seat backs, cushions and prop covers. Again, just ask and we will see what we can do.

Two of our staff are currently undergoing the Rotax maintenance courses to ensure that we are fully certified on all aspects of engine maintenance.

Now that we have a much better inventory of older stock we are going to start clearing space, so watch out for "winter specials" on eBay and our social media pages.

The future of the Flight Design CT range of aircraft appears to be now resolved, with us remaining as the design authority and working with Airmasters, which is the new UK agent. We have recently carried out repairs on a number of these excellent aircraft and still hold spares.

We are now able to offer finance for all new aircraft, as well as upgrades, under our new FCA appointed-representative status.

Finally, we have a number of exciting developments planned for 2019 which will include open workshops here at the factory.

I hope you had a wonderful festive season and wish you safe and happy flying in 2019.

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Cover photo Flashback to 2015 and Chris Wills flying his Quik GTR over Lake Pend Oreille in northern Idaho, USA. The lake, which is 148 miles long and up to 1150ft deep, was used by the US Navy for sonar and full-scale submarine prototype testing

This picture Clouds and flight (photo: John Sparks)



A taste of home

Heiko Breckwoldt crosses Germany to return to where his heart lies, on the north coast

For 40 years I've lived in the south of Germany, near Karlsruhe, but I was born in the North Sea town of Cuxhaven and my emotions for the coast and the ocean are still alive and strong.

Once a year, my family and I spend one or two weeks in my old homeland – unfortunately travelling by car, because my wife needs too much luggage, and any talk of reducing it to the very minimum is futile. Hair dryer, five pairs of shoes and at least 10 outfits plus accessories are needed, to be prepared for every situation from morning till night. OK, Honey, I understand your message: I fly solo.

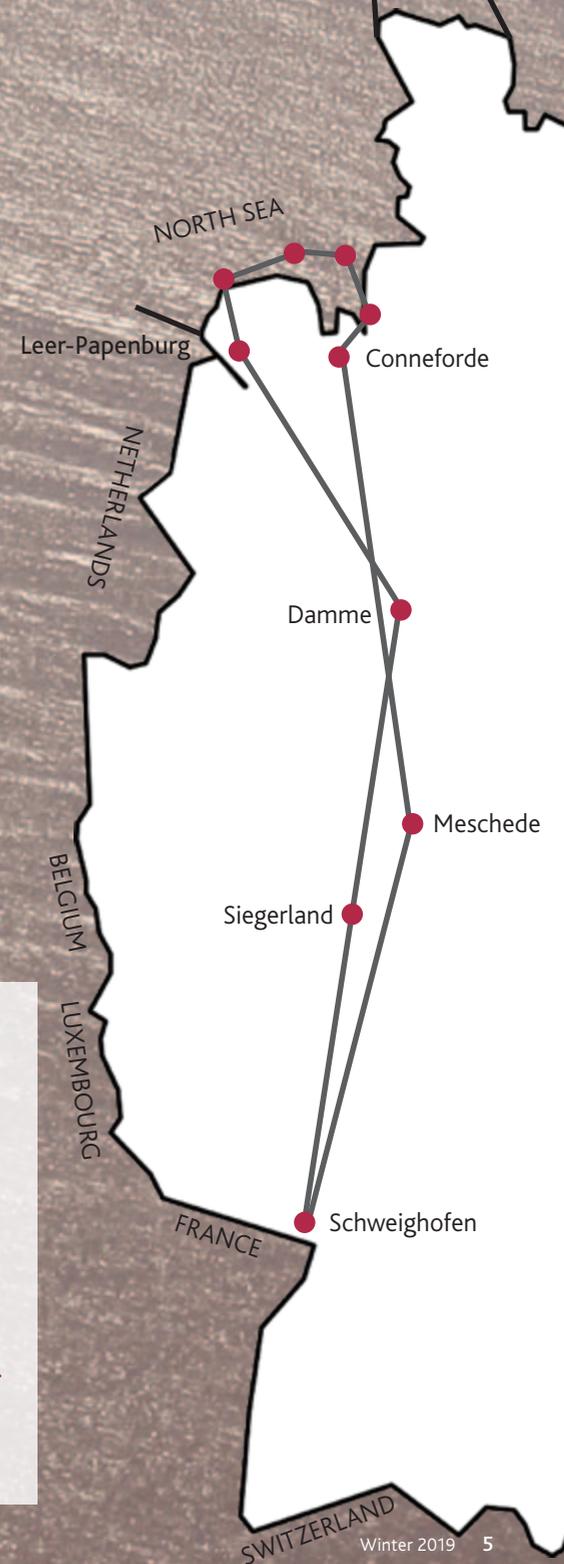
So Robert, my hangar neighbour, and his trike joined me on a round trip to the North Sea islands. He flies a Royal 912 trike with a 15m² wing. Its cruise speed is only 100-110km/h, but I promised

Robert to trim my QuikR slow and stay with him in formation, and call him my wingman.

Take off at our home base at Schweighofen (EDRO) was in the late afternoon. We decided to fly to Siegerland (EDGS), take gas and stay there overnight. Siegerland is a larger airport with an RMZ control zone, but despite this trikes are very welcome and the service was extremely friendly. They offered us overnight parking for our trikes in their big hangar and the use of their tower crew rooms to sleep. Just great!

Next day we were the very first to depart, heading north – next stop Damme (EDWC). It was already clear that flying in formation with a slow

Photo Over the North Sea and heading home: Heiko and QuikR





“ I trimmed my aircraft to 100km/h, but riding a race horse with the handbrake on gets pretty boring after a while

▶ trike is not easy for the much faster QuikR. I was able to trim my aircraft to 100km/h, and my fuel consumption went down to 8-9 l/h as a result, which was nice, but riding a race horse with the handbrake on gets pretty boring after a while.

So I told Robert, via radio, that I would give my QuikR the spurs from time to time and then wait for him for a few minutes by flying 360s. That worked very well, because Robert and me both have traffic monitors, so we always know where the other is (in a range of up to 10-15km).

We arrived in Damme around noon, refuelled, and, most importantly, took lunch. The airfield restaurant was open and the chef offered us “currywurst” with French fries. Currywurst is a very German fast-food speciality: a barbecued sausage topped with warm ketchup and some curry powder. Great meal for hungry pilots.

Next stop was Leer-Papenburg (EDWF), where

we refuelled for our ride out to the North Sea islands along the north west coast of Germany. The person on the tower was again very friendly, so much so that every arriving pilot got a pack of original East Friesian tea, which is a speciality of this northern part of Germany. We put life vests on and then checked our trikes twice: Robert checked mine and I checked his – four eyes see more than just two.

Preflights done, we departed complete with tea packages and reached the coastline after 30min. Visibility was great and we saw the East Friesian Islands lined up like a pearl necklace parallel to the coastline, 40km out. We flew about 1h over open water, islands right side, open sea left side, altitude 3000ft. Robert called me on the radio and suggested dropping the tea package to make the salty seawater drinkable. He has an interesting sense of humour.

Our next touchdown was at Conneforde (EDWP), where a friend of mine offered us overnight hospitality. Unfortunately, the hangars at Conneforde were all full, so we had to put our trikes to sleep under the stars. The QuikR



trike cover proved a great way to protect seats, instruments and other belongings against humidity, and two large tiedowns anchored the wing, one left, one right. Then, BRS secured and power off. Ready for dinner!

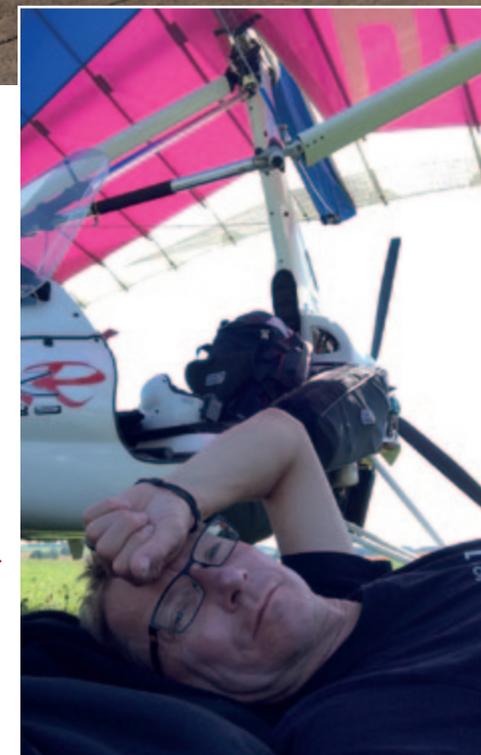
We had a great meal at a restaurant in Westerstede, the next city to Conneforde. Late that night we drove to my friend’s house, pumped up our air mattresses and unrolled our sleeping bags. After a last beer, we slipped into our bags and fell fast asleep, hoping that nothing would happen to our trikes overnight.

Next day we had breakfast early, because we wanted to get back to our trikes as quickly as possible and, of course, get airborne fast. At the airfield we found our two brave trikes still sleeping, so after removing the covers, unscrewing the

Above left Heiko (left) and Robert, kitted up for over-water flying

Above right Refuelling the Royal (left) and the QuikR. The aircraft have similar powerplants but feel very different in the air

Inset (right) Time to let the currywurst settle!





“ Crossing Germany in three days was a nice experience, and proved to me that I'd decided on the right trike, the QuikR

▶ tiedowns, refuelling and doing all our checks, we stepped into the flight preparation room in the tower to plan our next leg, to Meschede (EDKM). Take off was around 10am.

It was great to fly into the morning sky, to feel that I was heading south, towards home. It was also impressive to see the landscape below changing. Again I flew ahead, doing 360s for several minutes while waiting for Robert's Royal.

At noon we arrived at Meschede and took on fuel plus more currywurst. Unfortunately, the wind was now increasing and the day becoming more thermic.

On the way into Meschede, Robert had radioed me saying that he was having to "fight" the conditions. That is the disadvantage of a large wing with 15m² of area. By contrast my QuikR, with 11m² and a much faster airspeed of 140km/h, dealt with the turbulence quite comfortably – a big

advantage of the small Quik-series wings versus large "barn doors".

We decided to wait until the thermals had abated, and it was late afternoon when we started our last leg, to our home base at Schweighofen. After 1h I radioed Robert but received no answer. Several more unanswered calls later, I decided to fly direct to Schweighofen and wait for Robert there.

On landing, I called him via mobile and got contact immediately. He told me that the turbulence and the "air work" he had to do with his large wing was still too much, so he'd decided to land at a nearby airfield and wait again. Two hours later he arrived safely in Schweighofen.

Crossing Germany in three days was a nice experience, and proved to me that I'd decided on the right trike, the QuikR.

Wishing you all happy landings. ■

Above We flew about 1h over open water, islands right side, open sea left side, altitude 3000ft

Right End of a day's flying for two trikes and their pilots





Bravery takes many forms

Andrew Cranfield with a humbling tale of courage and fortitude

In 2012, while Bill Brooks was en-route back to the UK from the ULM airshow at Blois, he was forced to land at Servigny, Bessé-sur-Braye, due to bad weather. When he knocked on the farm door, Mme Jacqueline Menant answered and first asked him “where is your bicycle?” Bill explained, in his best schoolboy French, that he did not have a *bicyclette* and had in fact landed his aeroplane in her field.

Clearly recognising him as an eccentric Brit, she became very excited when she saw his machine and told him that the last aircraft to land on their farm had been a Lysander, which she remembered well as she was a young teenager at the time.

She explained that during the Second World War her family had hidden a British agent on the

farm for some three months. It’s believed the agent got away, but her father and three brothers were rounded up by the Gestapo and all perished in Buchenwald concentration camp.

Since 2012, Bill has stayed in touch with the family and in early September, en-route to Blois, he and I were determined to find the farm again. When Bill was certain that we had found the right place, we did eight low passes in the Flying For Freedom PulsR, which with its Union Flag sail would certainly ensure the folk on the ground knew who we were, but we could not detect any sign of life.

We didn’t dare land, as the stubble was quite long and during the 2012 landing Bill had damaged a spat; we were not keen to do the same to the



PulsR. Slightly disappointed, we trundled on our way to Blois and had a very good airshow.

Despite a delayed departure from Blois (due to a spectacular gyro crash on take off and a Dynamic pilot managing to collapse his noseleg on landing about 15 minutes later – I reckon he was distracted by seeing the gyroplane wreckage while on finals) we wanted to overfly Jacqueline’s farm again on the way home.

Finding it this time was much easier. Again we did about eight low passes, all the while waving madly and looking for any signs of life. Sadly, we didn’t see any movement at all and, feeling a little disappointed, we left the area and headed home via Granville, flying over a Royal Navy exercise mid-Channel, before passing over the Isle of Wight Needles, basking in warm evening sunlight, and then going through the Southampton Area. We arrived back at Manton at about 2130 hours, the end to a very successful trip, but tinged with sadness that Jacqueline hadn’t seen our tribute.

After we got back home, we reflected on the tremendous skill of the Lysander pilots in finding these fields at the dead of night, purely by dead reckoning and with little in the way of geographic features to navigate by, and certainly none of the

electronic devices that we take for granted today – seriously impressive piloting skills.

However, a few weeks later, we were delighted to receive an email from her daughter Coco. Apparently Jacqueline, who is now 88, had seen us from inside her house!

That really made the trip for me, as the cold, calculated courage of this family, over a long period of time, was bravery of the highest order. This wasn’t instant courage forged in the heat of a battle but calculated risks taken by the whole family for the greater good. They knew full well the terrible consequences if they were suspected or discovered by the Gestapo.

It is hard to believe that such dramatic events took place around such a picturesque small farmhouse. We should certainly never forget their bravery. We have a huge debt of honour to these brave souls, which is easy to forget when you see what appears to be such a normal peaceful rural setting.

Madame Menant, we salute you and your family. *Vive la France! Vive la liberté!* ■

*Facing page Found it! The farm of Jacqueline Menant
Above Crossing the coast in the PulsR*



Chris Wills' Quik GTR that he bought at the end of 2013 has just turned over 400h, and recently took him to Sedona in Arizona, an area of south-western USA 100 miles from the Grand Canyon that is noted for spectacular red sandstone rock formations

An airman's holiday

What do flying instructors do in their leisure time? Go flying, of course!

Peter and Anne McLean report on the Unusual Attitude Airpark Fly-in

Another magnificent day in paradise at P&M Aviation Australia's base at Yarrowonga. But today is going to be different. No training flights today, we are taking the day off. Yes, that's right, a day off! Woohoo!

Today we have been invited to attend a fly-in at our friend Clint's airfield, known as the Unusual Attitude Airpark. The airfield is near the town of Heathcote, in Victoria. Clint purchased the property a few years ago and decided to build an airfield on it.

And Clint doesn't do anything by halves. There is not just one runway, but three... not to mention aircraft parking areas, a hangar and a hard stand, accommodation for pilots and crews, as well as a luxurious barbecue area, and of course, a swimming pool. I don't think I have left anything out (but I may have). The place looks great, and as Clint is always finding something else to add, by the time you read this there will probably be even more to see and do.

I had worked out a flight plan more than a week before the flight, so all I had to do was add the weather for the day. Our plan was to depart YYWG (Yarrowonga Aerodrome) and track for YSHT (Shepparton Aerodrome) and then fly on to Lake Eppalock. The aerodrome is right in the middle of the lake, where the land juts into the lake. Shouldn't be hard to find, should it? But it turned out

that there are three airfields in the same area, and they all look almost the same!

We departed YYWG into the light smooth air and headed for Shepparton Aerodrome in the HypeR. We climbed to 2500ft and sat back to enjoy the flight.

After departing Yarrowonga, the surrounding countryside started to change from grazing land to orchard and cell grazing, as we flew closer to Shepparton. Before I knew it, I was making our overflying radio call at 10nm, but there was nothing in the circuit, no other calls heard, so we continued on our way.

Finally, we heard one call from a departing aircraft as we passed overhead the aerodrome. The aircraft was tracking to the north. No conflict to us, as Anne and I were "wondering what the poor people were doing today". Oh, that's right, they were all heading to Clint's place, like us.

Next sight to see was the Waranga Basin. The basin was ▶

Facing page Waranga Basin, a large water storage area for Victoria

This page, from top Graytown state forest; chilling out at the Unusual Attitude Airpark; and the airpark as seen from above



▶▶▶ Day out in Oz

▶ nearly full of water and looking good. We passed over the basin and continued our track for Lake Eppalock. It didn't take long and, "there's the airfield! Or is it that one? Or could it that one?"

"Stop looking, I found it."

There were a number of aircraft sitting in the parking area, and we could see two Aeros Ants flying around the edge of the lake. I couldn't really tell which runway was which.

I asked one of the other aircraft that was coming into land before us, "which runway are you landing on?" The reply was, "The uphill one".

I said to Anne, "That will do, I think it's runway 20". We joined the circuit and landed with no dramas at all. After taxiing to the parking area we saw more aircraft coming in. It turned out that about 60 aircraft had turned up for the barbecue, and a number of people were staying overnight.

The barbie was great and the local flying was too. In fact the whole day was just fantastic, one of those days when all the stars aligned. Everyone had a great time socializing, flying and just having fun.

But time was ticking away, and before we knew it, it was time for us to head home. I preflighted the HypeR for the flight home and we climbed aboard. Engine started and we taxied for runway 20. We had to wait for two or three aircraft to land before it was our turn.

Off we went, down the runway and into the air, climbing at 1500ft/min. It didn't take long before we were banking, overflying the airfield and waving to those who were staying

overnight, then tracking for Shepparton. As we departed we flew past two Aeros Ants, who looked as if they were going backwards as we passed them at 90kt.

We climbed to 3500ft and before we knew it, we were over the top of Waranga basin and speeding for Shepparton. Then it was time to change the radio frequencies again, to the Shepparton CTAF. No calls were heard as we made our way from 10nm to over the top. Next we were flying over the flat lands and heading home.

Soon it was time to change the frequency again to Yarrowonga's CTAF, and make our call, followed by a quick flight over the town to check out the Yarrowonga Show. There seemed to be a lot of people there this year, which is pleasing because it rained last year and they nearly called the show off. We then joined the circuit and landed on runway 01.

Our flight was now over. What a day it had been! Just what we needed, a day with good friends and (of course) talking aviation.

Thank you Clint for a top day at a top spot. ■

- *Peter and Anne are proprietors of P&M Aviation Australia (pm@pmaviation.com.au)*

Photos

- 1 *Heading home from the airpark, near the state forest and farmland*
- 2 *Shepparton Aerodrome, Central Victoria, in the afternoon light*
- 3 *Heading for Shepparton...*
- 4 *...and overflying the aerodrome*
- 5 *Back home at the Yarrowonga hangar*



A long flight to acceptance

Ivan Shovkoplyas with a fascinating insight into flexwing flying in Ukraine

To understand microlighting in Ukraine, it is first necessary to understand that despite the sport being very popular (in flexwings particularly), it is hard to do legally.

There are hundreds of trikes flying in Ukraine, yet only seven legal machines and some 10-15 legal pilots (depending on whose medical is current at any point in time). The Ukrainian equivalent of the CAA is only just beginning the process of legalising flexwings. Nevertheless, there is much to tell about flying in Eastern Europe – and in Ukraine in particular.

I've been flying flexwings since the age of three, when my dad (Ivan Shovkoplyas Senior, a flexwing instructor at the time) took me to the airfield back in 1989. It was a short 10min local flight in a military-built T-2, with shoulder straps that were too large for a little boy, obliging dad to put more clothes on me so he could get them tight.

The aircraft had neither registration nor airworthiness permit, and things didn't change much through the 1990s and 2000s, with hundreds of trikes flying but very few legal pilots or machines. Most were used for crop-dusting, short tours at the seaside or training flights; only a minority were for private flying. For several decades Ukrainian airspace was regulated by the military, as it was during the Soviet regime.

However, even though it was difficult to fly cross-country, we did manage to put on two international rallies in the 1990s. The first was the Kiev-Odessa rally in 1992, which attracted not only Ukrainian and Russian teams but also several from Britain and France. One English pilot had a Pegasus Quasar with a Q1 wing, the first time a P&M trike had ever flown in Ukraine.

Next year, 1993, another enormous (even by current standards) event occurred – the Kiev to Toulouse Air Rally. My father took part, using a homebuilt trike with a self-built prop, a new engine and an Antonov wing.

With a large number of crews (flexwing and three-axis, solo and dual, from Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Britain and France), this was the largest general-aviation event ever held in Ukraine, a record it held until 2016. Again, all the Ukrainian trikes were homebuilt and none had a registration or permit. But because of the amount of media attention attracted, the military did provide some permits for the event.

This rally brought another P&M machine to Ukraine, this time a Pegasus Quasar 582 with Q2

wing. I remember my father talking a lot about this beautiful design with its unique trim system.

The route covered Ukraine-Belarus-Poland-Germany and France, but there were many problems, malfunctions, political issues, passport difficulties and other delays, so much so that only four teams made it to the finish in Toulouse. All these years afterwards, I'm still rather proud that my father was not only the sole Ukrainian crew to make it to the very end but actually won the rally! After this event he found a sponsor to purchase a brand new Quasar 582 with a Q2 wing.

With such a beautiful machine he was invited to various airshows and events, and also participated successfully at a World Championship in Poland, where he gained fourth place.

It is this trike which became my entry point into flying flexwings.

I absolutely loved the look of the Quasar – nice curves, great design, light in weight, a pleasure to fly in. My dad and I became a father-and-son crew, Ivan Shovkoplyas Senior and Ivan Shovkoplyas Junior. He also had some other trikes but I loved the Quasar most of all.

It was some time before we were in the market for another trike, but when the opportunity arose, in 2009, we chose a QuikR. By this time we had a well established flexwing manufacturer in Ukraine in the form of Aeros, so the decision not to buy an indigenous product was rather difficult to make, but we don't regret it because the QuikR opened wider horizons for our flying. In particular, it offered a route to legalisation of our flying, which became my aim.

Until 2015 it was impossible to obtain a flexwing microlight license because there were no legal flying schools for trikes! So I had no choice but to validate an International Flight Training Organization. Through a Polish flying school, I obliged our Ukrainian CAA to accept international documents for trikes, something which had never been done here before. It was risky, costly and a real headache in terms of paperwork, but – and I'm sure readers will understand this – we were so passionate about our flying that we were prepared to see it through.

So it was that our group of four pilots (my father and I plus two fellow pilots) went to Poland for groundschool and hour-building for our licenses. It took several months but we achieved great success – we became legal microlight pilots according to Ukrainian legislation!

▶▶▶ Flying in Ukraine

▶ Between April 2010 and December 2012 I was also involved in another legislative project – registering a foreign-built trike – our QuikR – which thus became the first trike with a type certificate in the Ukrainian register, carrying the registration UR-KWIK.

There has also been another significant change: no more military control for general aviation. Now we have some Class G airspace in Ukraine – another sign of a bright flying future.

These events opened new horizons for me: legal cross-countries, flying in controlled airspace, visiting international airfields. In fact, our QuikR was the first open-cockpit Ukrainian-registered microlight to visit international airports in Ukraine.

Since 2013 I've been trying to involve as many people in flying as possible, and I've had some success, but GA here has been hit by our economic problems and the war in eastern Ukraine; even microlight activity has dropped dramatically. But we still organise annual fly-ins and airshows, particularly Kiev Avia Fest at UKKK (Kiev Airport) in 2016. My wife Victoria always flies with me and our return trip to the event was one of the highlights of the year – search "Ukraine Avia Fest 2016" on Google or YouTube for my videos of the event. (In fact, I had a trim motor failure on final at UKKK, but as I keep myself current for dead-stick landing and trim failure, I managed a successful fast-trim landing).

I particularly enjoyed the long conversation I had with a British trike pilot, who noticed the QuikR and came over to chat. Meetings like that make our international community closer and friendlier.

I'd love to get a group of British microlight pilots to take a 35-40h tour of Ukraine, entering through the historic city of Lviv and continuing to Kiev and the Black Sea resort of Odessa. If any readers like the idea, I'd be very happy to help with legalities and planning.

Ukraine has a number of aeronautical manufacturers, but most machines are exported; locals tend to build their own or buy a kit from Aeros. Making a homebuilt trike legal, however, had never been done until I helped a friend of mine put his design, with modified Kawasaki motorcycle engine, through the system. It took two years and lots of analysis of other countries' legal systems, but finally the Chibis trike (registration UR-PIPE as its owner smokes a pipe every hour) has a certificate of registration and a permit to fly.

This victory over the local CAA means there are now two legal trikes in my hangar. Meanwhile our Quasar is still waiting for a new Rotax 582, having had its tubes changed and a 20h wing fitted.

Ukrainian trike pilots tend to have their own fly-in in central Ukraine, and I've visited it several times. This year it was held in mid-October and my father and I decided to go. We didn't plan a lot – just fuelled the trike and departed from Kharkiv Rokitne (UKVR) to Znamenka, 290km or 2h away.

During the flight we noticed that radio communication has rapidly changed from Russian/Ukrainian to English. Even as recently as last year, we could only hear English at CTRs and TMAs. But as more and more private pilots obtain ICAO Level 4 or Level 5, English is becoming the norm.

This was another superb day for father and son – just what microlights are all about! Nevertheless I prefer cross-country flying and staying overnight, with tents and sleeping bags, visiting places, meeting people. The microlight airfield infrastructure is growing in Ukraine, and it is not a problem to organize fuel, food, shelter and hangarage.

Usually we travel in two trikes with four people – the QuikR's side bags assist greatly! – and I pack two sleeping bags under the back seat between the gas strut, tank and seat shell. Of course, I have to trim back for slow flight as the other trike is a homebuilt with an Aeros Profi wing, but at least we travel with friends and I save some fuel.

In this formation we went to a very enjoyable fly-in at Zaporizhia, whose main purpose was to gather together as many pilots as possible and bring flying to the public in a celebratory atmosphere. Over 50,000 people attended and rock singers (including Ukrainian band Aviator) entertained the crowd.

An Open Helicopter Championship attracted participants from all over Ukraine and Belarus and there were dozens of flexwings, three-axis microlights and gyros for the public to watch and inspect. Only three were legal though: – UR-KWIK, UR-PIPE and Calidus gyro UR-JEKA.

Next day we set off to Mayskoe, a dropzone near Dnipro. I skydived while at school and university, though not any more. But I was travelling with a friend who is still current, and he did several jumps, so thanks to our flexwing we combined a concert and skydiving in one weekend. That's what I call fun!

On the way home our QuikR was trying to ▶



*From top
Enjoying relatively warm November
air above our home city Kharkiv, in
Class C airspace*

*Ivan Junior just before his first flight
in 1989 on a T-2 type microlight.
Ivan Senior (on his knees) is making
sure the seat belts are doing their
job*

*With my pregnant wife Victoria at
UKOE Odessa Hidroport after our
Kharkiv-Odessa trip. Just a few
minutes away from the Black Sea
shore and beautiful Odessa, it's a
"must do" landing site for all visiting
foreign pilots*



▶▶▶ Flying in Ukraine

▶ run away from the Chibis, but I just couldn't do it because I was also navigating for him.

Independence Day in Ukraine is 24 August, a Bank Holiday and a chance for another trip by Chibis and QuikR. The forecast was good, so that morning two fully loaded and fuelled trikes were waiting for us in the hangar.

We'd made a few changes the day before because although our QuikR can cope with being fully loaded at 30+°C, the Chibis' engine has been known to boil. So plastic water pipes were attached to the sides of the trike to direct more air to the radiator.

We set off for our destination, an airshow at Mayskoe, in search of fun – music, picnics and flying. But the 1.5h flight was rather panicky: limited by the Chibis, the QuikR was travelling at only 100km/h airspeed and, because of a strong headwind, this gave us only 70 km/h groundspeed according to our GPS. Our worry was that we would miss our time slot for landing, only 5min ahead of a formation of jets and propeller-driven aerobatic planes.

Thirty miles from final, the headwind changed to a crosswind, which helped us reach the destination *just* ahead of the aerobatic team, which nevertheless had to circle at the holding point awaiting our flexwings – the first time in Ukraine that a formation has had to wait for microlights.

We had a great time watching the superb aerobatics team and seeing local skydivers set a record, jumping with a huge blue and yellow Ukrainian flag. Then, refuelled, we set off to another local microlight field at Dnipro, not far away. This was a sunset flight above the river Dnipro and the city – Class G airspace at that particular point but with a CTR only half a mile to the south, so I was glad to have a transponder.

We were also glad of the sleeping bags stowed under the seat, for although the sun was burning hot during the day, by late August nights in Ukraine are becoming chilly.

Next morning we had a nice flight back home, a flight which demonstrated why having a radio is essential here, when we had to escape a military helicopter on final, cruising at 50m AGL.

Visiting international airports is another temptation I cannot resist. Lviv, Dnipro, Kiev, and Kharkiv are among the largest I have landed at – I practise approaches and touch-and-goes regularly.

Dnipro (UKDD) was a unique flight, as it is both a civil and a military airport. So there were not only

Antonov transport aircraft, but also Mig-29 jets and military helicopters, Mil-24 and Mil-8.

Incidentally, it is quite common to see (or hear, perhaps) a low-flying military helicopter here in eastern Ukraine as they are supporting our troops. Because of the war, a Notam has been introduced in our region requiring a flight plan for all flights, even in Class G airspace.

Having logged only over 160h this year, of which 115 were on a QuikR, I had an opportunity to visit our friends in Odessa, 600km from our home in Kharkiv. This was a unique tour and it deserves a mention because for the first time in Ukraine, a two-seat microlight was legally carrying three people! It wasn't a record attempt, or a search and rescue, just me and my pregnant wife Victoria. She was sitting in the back seat as usual, but what wasn't usual was her eight-month belly!

It was a bit risky, I believe, but my flight plan included four international alternative airports, just in case...

But everything was OK, we had a fine time with our old friends (also microlight pilots), and enjoyed another 600km flight back home a few days later.

Ukraine does not operate a national search and rescue (SAR) service, instead local regions make their own arrangements. Three years ago my local airfield, Rokitne, became the base for the first GA voluntary SAR organization, with pilots making SAR flights at their own expense. Microlights are now also involved: I find a flexwing rather effective in this role, as flying at lower speeds and altitudes increases the chance of finding people.

Hopefully this will engender a positive attitude to microlights at our CAA.

Our most remarkable tour in the QuikR, however, has to be the flight by my father and I to Scotland, a 7709km round trip in 54h. But perhaps that should wait for another article.

Overall, Ukraine is a nice country worth a visit. With many microlight activities, a number of airfields to visit and a wide variety of trikes to observe, it remains a country unknown to many Europeans but rich in aviation history and traditions, and blessed with friendly pilots. The legislation process is still rather slow, but all roads are now open for those who already have their documents. Next year I also hope to take our legal Quasar on tours across Ukraine.

Our country is most definitely open to foreign microlights, and we hope to host many European trike pilots on their travels. Welcome to Ukraine! ■



*From top
After many years in legal limbo,
cross-country flying is now a reality
in Ukraine*

*Our P&M fleet: Quasar on left,
Quik on right*

*Spot the Quik! A remarkable shot
taken at an airshow, taxiing in front
of other aircraft*



Brian Milton lands after a nostalgic flight in the original Global Flyer Quantum, in which he circum-navigated the world in 1998. Now owned by Fred Oran, the aircraft is still going strong and living in France



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