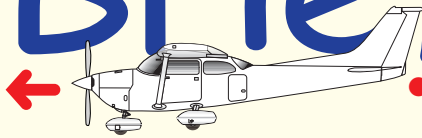


# Briefings



## No plain sailing for solo flyer

Mike Perham, the 19-year-old Londoner with ambitions to become the first person to both sail and fly solo around the world, has suffered a setback with the change of ownership at Cabair, who have withdrawn their sponsorship of his flying lessons after 20 hours. Mike is looking for new

support... can anyone pick up the baton?

Mike has already achieved half of his goal – in August 2009 he became the youngest person to sail solo around the world, completing an epic voyage which very many people urged him not to undertake; it was too dangerous, he was too inexperienced, it was the worst time of

year in the Southern Oceans. He set out when he was 16 years old and confounded his detractors by completing the voyage in nine months, despite serious problems with his yacht's autopilot and sometimes-brutal weather.

Mike's hero is Sir Francis Chichester, the legendary solo circumnavigator in his yacht Gipsy Moth IV, whose attempt to fly solo around the world in a Tiger Moth ended with an accident in Japan. That was in 1931; no-one has ever achieved the double sailing and flying solo feat.

Finding sponsorship is the key; Robert F Scott always said that the most difficult part of an expedition was over when he set sail. Mike's yachting feat was underwritten by the finance advice website [totallymoney.com](http://totallymoney.com) and others, and all credit is due to them for supporting a venture so totally at odds with today's risk-averse, nanny-state mindset. They reaped their reward with huge amounts of publicity when Mike sailed back into Portsmouth, and have benefited ever since. Persuading backers to come in is hard enough for established adventurers; for a 16-year-old to have funded a round-the-world solo sail is extraordinary.

The plan calls for Mike to visit 18 countries as he flies around 23,000 miles over three months. To comply with FAI regulations the flight must start and finish at the same aerodrome, cross all meridians and be not less than 19,864nm – equal in length to the Tropic of Cancer. Mike has few illusions about the main problems he faces – weather and bureaucracy.

Mike, an ambassador for the Prince's Trust and UK Youth among others, is currently training for the Sydney-Hobart yacht race, in which he will be part of the youngest-ever crew. He says: "If only more people of my age realised they too could live their dreams. Nothing is impossible if you want it enough. I come from land-locked Potters Bar, yet I managed to sail around the world."

Details on [www.challengemike.com](http://www.challengemike.com), or email [mike@challengemike.com](mailto:mike@challengemike.com) ■

## GA Safety Award time

The CAA is once again calling for nominations for its annual General Aviation Safety Award, which seeks to honour individuals and teams who, through skill and determination, have made a lasting contribution to GA flight safety. Whether it is a one-off incident, or a lifetime of campaigning work, the CAA is keen to give credit where it is due.

The Authority says that although many previous winners have been honoured for displaying good airmanship in potentially serious flying incidents, it encourages nominations for individuals or organisations whose contribution to flight safety might be more enduring, such as maintenance engineers, aerodrome managers and air traffic controllers. Last year's winners were AOPA's Channel Islands Chairman Charles Strasser, who runs the 'Strasser Scheme' under which airports agree to waive landing fees in the event of genuine emergency or unplanned diversion; and John Thorpe, former Chief Executive of GASCo.

Nominees should be over 16 years of age and can be organisations as well as individuals. You can suggest a nominee at [www.caa.co.uk/gasafetyaward](http://www.caa.co.uk/gasafetyaward) or by emailing [press.office@caa.co.uk](mailto:press.office@caa.co.uk) with full contact details and reasons for nomination. The closing date for nominations is July 31st.



# Do you know what you're signing?



*Reformed bureaucrat **Andy Raymond\*** discusses the place the *Flying Order Book* occupies in our hearts*

‘Will a ship work without discipline?’ asked Fletcher Christian of his fellow mutineers. ‘No sir!’ they responded to a man. Even those men who had been terribly oppressed recognised the fact that every situation where results were expected required some form of ‘reasonable’ regulation. By the same token, we who fly little aeroplanes expect that we will be subject to some kind of regulation in order that we may all live together, sharing the same airspace safely and in good order.

However, the tradition of law and regulation in this country has usually meant that elected persons and their bureaucrats are accountable to those they serve. As an ex-bureaucrat, I know that the only thing that inspires you in your employment is the fact that you might achieve a half-reasonable pension when your employer decides that they no longer need you, because despite popular belief, public sector pay is not as good as is generally perceived. In pursuance of this end, it would not pay a bureaucrat to take any chances and make any ‘rash’ decisions that might destroy their pension entitlement.

Now we do know from experience, that the machines that we fly of all sorts of

descriptions are not falling out of the sky wholesale. In addition, when studying accident statistics we find that of late, the additional requirements in both flight crew licensing and airworthiness will have very little effect on safety and good order. For the bureaucrat it is much easier to say no to any relaxation of regulations and yes to further swingeing extra requirements, as for them this is the most secure philosophy.

Some time ago I decided to review the club's standing orders so I looked to the CAA's codes of aviation practice for inspiration and found a document called the Recreational Aviation Activity Manual. Although I do not pick on the author of this document in particular, the code is a shining example of the detachment that a regulatory body has from those it should serve. A case might be made that the regulatory body is only interested in promoting safety, but in truth, what actually happens is that people who run clubs, self-fly hire organisations and possibly groups are the ones that prevent people flying unless they are considered safe; this is generally achieved by having rules in such organisations that the customers are aware of, and agree to. Please note that I have said ‘agreed to’, because if the pilot believes in the regime then they will be happy to follow it. However, the regulatory body's reasoning says that they must sign some tome of a document they are supposed to have read and digested, on a regular basis. How many club pilots really know what is in the standing orders? How many refer to it before undertaking a flight?

Now I do confess that the culture of our great country will put in the dock anyone who seems to have made an error of judgement, whether deliberate or not, and hold against them anything they have said, written or signed. This is the blame culture. It is probably designed to sell newspapers.

Very soon in the great scheme of things we are about to be attacked by EASA as a regulatory body and I for one fear with great foreboding what ridiculous extra, more costly rules are about to hit us. Already I am told that my CAA licences will no longer be valid until I part with £160 per licence: never mind that I have been quite safely flying around the planet for more than thirty-six years. Also I fear that the ‘club’ principle that has served this nation well for decades will be regulated out of existence.

I do not know who these people are who will be making rules for me and mine to follow. If my experience with other EC issues are of any use, they will be persons from some far off land who have no understanding of the aspirations of those who fly little aeroplanes and helicopters in this country.

On top of this, we have the aims of the airlines and commercial operators who seem to have an unhealthy influence on the regulatory bodies. Has anyone else noticed articles in other aviation publications espousing the fact that commercial operators are much safer than private pilots? Is the reader aware that our smaller regional airports seem to be catering more for jet propelled tax dodgers than clubs and private owners of little aircraft? Could it be that our long enjoyed freedoms of the air are to be sacrificed because some non-dom feels he needs more controlled airspace, lest we get in his way?

So what is the answer to all this moaning? We must continue to question bureaucracy and ask why.

Safe flying comes from good regimes run by responsible people, acting responsibly in collectives such as clubs, who are not burdened by unnecessary regulation. These persons must be represented collectively at the highest level. Unfortunately, we must have lost the battle of Waterloo and nobody told us because the system of ‘democracy’ now being practised in Europe is the Napoleonic system and not the Dutch one that we have enjoyed for decades. (That is to say, things used to be legal unless they were specifically proscribed; but now, things may be forbidden unless expressly allowed by statute.) We cannot make those that are in positions of authority subject to recall or even account, leave alone their faceless bureaucrats. The bureaucrat cares little for the age-old freedoms enjoyed by those living on an island off the coast of Europe. He will be more interested in the preservation of his pension, and the chance that he may get promotion to a higher level which will enhance his final salary.

We must make a stand together through the good offices of organisations like AOPA. We will certainly be outgunned by the lobbying abilities of airlines and others who have a vested interest in severely restricting what we do so that they can make more money. I do feel that we are chucking stones at an elephant, and without the very costly lobbying abilities of those that would oppose us, all we can do is protest. Remember, at a later Admiralty hearing Captain Bligh was exonerated.

If we fight we may never win. If we keep fighting we will certainly never lose.

*\*Andy Raymond is a director of London Transport Flying Club at Fairoaks* ■

# Two new airfield closures

**P**lymouth Airport is to close by the end of this year, with its operators saying its scheduled services are handling fewer than 100 passengers a day and the airport is unviable. The resident FTO, Plymouth Flying School, is planning to relocate to an unnamed destination. Strenuous attempts are being made by local businesses to prevent the closure but it looks like a done deal. Skeptics say that by giving a 150-year low-cost lease on the airport to a property development company with no experience of operating an airport, Plymouth City Council effectively drove a stake through the airport's heart. An application for commercial and residential development of the airport site is

confidently expected when economic conditions improve.

Bristol Filton is to close at the end of next year, a move which affects two FTOs, Bristol Aero Club and Aeros Filton. Owners BAe Systems drove out a lot of private aircraft owners in August last year by ending all weekend operations, with some relocating to Gloucester.

The CAA has announced a change in airspace arrangements in the Cotswold region in view of the end of flying operations at RAF Lyneham on September 30th 2011. The Lyneham Control Zone and Control Area are removed from October 1st, although the Zone may be reimposed for occasional movements up to

December 31st 2012, when RAF Lyneham formally closes.

The changes will be incorporated in edition 9 of the quarter-mil chart for 'West & South Wales' due to be published on October 20, 2011, while the 'Southern England' half-mil will be updated on March 8th 2012.

On a brighter note, Newquay Airport in Cornwall is making positive moves to attract GA by cutting its charges and ending the requirement for compulsory handling for certain GA flights. The new landing fee of £25 (plus VAT) for aircraft under 2,500 kg includes ILS approaches, and the handling charge of £24.15 is waived for aircraft taking on fuel between 9am and 5pm – it still applies outside those hours. It also applies if you're not prepared to walk from the GA parking area to the handlers' office, which you can do if you've got a high-vis vest. Newquay also has ample hangarage available. ■



Valerie McAuliffe

**Above: Plymouth airport, an aerodrome since 1923, is to close at the end of the year**  
**Below: Newquay, formerly RAF St Mawgan, is seeking to attract more GA**

## Italians in Belgium

Another date for your diary – the vintage aircraft fly-in at Schaffen Diest this year is from August 12th to 14th, and it incorporates the 28th meeting outside Italy of Frati aircraft like the Falco, Nibbio, Picchio and SF260. As well as being a good show, Diest is pretty handy for those who are a bit nervous about venturing far into the unknown innards of Europe – it's an ideal first venture beyond the Channel ports. There's always a good turnout of Brits, not all in vintage aircraft, with pilots also flying in from Italy, Austria, Denmark, Germany and France. Have a look at their website [www.dac.be](http://www.dac.be) and click on 'fly in'.



Richard Jones