



FREEDOM IN THE AIR | 32 A CURWEN ROAD | LONDON | W12 9AE

Media Contact: +44 (0) 20 8740 8806  
e-mail: [airmail@freedomintheair.org](mailto:airmail@freedomintheair.org)  
[www.freedomintheair.org](http://www.freedomintheair.org)

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## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT:** Gautam Lewis at +44 (0) 208 740 8806 / +44 (0) 7980 315 720 (London)  
[Gautam@freedomintheair.org](mailto:Gautam@freedomintheair.org)

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### Freedom Wings at Cranfield, EGTC

(London - UK: **INSERT DATE**) On SUNDAY 30<sup>th</sup> May 2010, Freedom in the Air (FITA) will be hosting an 'Introduction to Aviation' day beginning at 10:30 from Cranfield Airport in Bedfordshire. The day is named, for obvious reasons, Freedom Wings day and, with the support of Cranfield Airport, will be Freedom in the Air's second at the Airport for the 2010 summer flying season.

10 people with a mixture of disabilities from **Attitude is Everything** will have the chance of a lifetime to experience the freedom of flight, in the hope that it may expand their horizons when they attend the "Freedom Wings" day.

Attitude is Everything improves Deaf and disabled people's access to live music by working in partnership with audiences, artists and the music industry to implement a Charter of Best Practice across the UK. They challenged the status quo with two creations. The Attitude is Everything Charter of Best Practice encourages live venue promoters to publicly show their commitment to improving access. Club Attitude is held in fully accessible venues and features a mixture of live performers (both disabled and non disabled), attracting guest slots from artists including Mystery Jets, Foals, Art Brut and DJ sets from Alan McGee, Get Cape Wear Cape Fly and DJ Void.

Together we intend to show that anyone with a disability can reach for the skies, and achieve virtually anything, sometimes with only the very smallest amount of support. The pilots 'one off' flight could be as life changing for them as someone who flies every week and ends up with their Private Pilots Licence. To have piloted an aircraft even once is clearly a massive experience for a person with a disability and a huge achievement.

The Freedom Wings pilots will learn all about being a pilot, before having their own private flight in a light aircraft, where if they wish, they can take control of the aircraft. A C172 operated by Cranfield Flying School and fitted with the Union Aviation hand control will be one of 2 aircrafts being flown on the day. The hand controls enable a pilot with lower limb disabilities to operate the aeroplanes rudder pedals with their hands.

Mike Willoughby, Chief Flying Instructor at Cranfield Flying School comments " Both myself and our organisation are keen to support the promotion of aviation to disabled people. We are happy to do as much as we can to help disabled people become pilots. As an instructor I am naturally keen to encourage anyone to learn to fly. My experience teaching Gautam Lewis was very rewarding and emphasised that anyone can learn to fly if they have the desire, are encouraged to do so and realise that most barriers to learning can be overcome."

The Freedom Wings schedule then goes on with events each month over the summer with PHAB, Young Carers in Bedfordshire, The Douglas Bader Foundation and finally with Fun for Young People in September.

The days will be organised as a fun day for all and it is hoped to see many smiles. If you wish further information please visit our website at <http://www.freedomintheair.org> or call Gautam Lewis +44 (0) 208 740 8806.

The day long event will culminate in each pilot receiving a personal record of their flight, together with goody bags provided by Sebastian Pooley, of Pooleys Flight Equipment, and signed certificates, as a memento of a very unique day.





-Ends-

## Notes to editors:

### FREEDOM WINGS 2010 SCHEDULE CRANFIELD EGTC

#### May

22 Variety Club children's disabled charity <http://www.varietyclub.org.uk>  
 30 Attitude is Everything <http://www.attitudeiseverything.org.uk>

#### July

17 PHAB <http://www.phab.org.uk>  
 23 Young Carers in Beds Charity <http://www.spurgeons.org>  
 24 Spurgeons young Carers charity <http://www.spurgeons.org>

#### August

T.B.C Douglas Bader Foundation <http://douglasbaderfoundation.co.uk>  
 24 Cultural Community Partnerships <http://www.culturalcommunitypartnerships.org.uk>

#### September

4 & 5 Fun for Young People

Freedom in the Air (FITA) is a new, unique and exciting aviation Not-for-profit Community Interest Company registered in England and Wales Company No. 05797842

Freedom Wings is organised by Freedom in the Air (FITA) – a not-for-profit organisation based in London. FITA is committed to opening horizons for people with disabilities so that they can fly higher socially, physically and professionally. We challenge, we educate, we give transferable skills through learning to fly. Flying aeroplanes can raise people's sights, expand their horizons, improve their life chances and fulfill their potential.

We want to train pilots with disabilities who can emulate the unbreakable spirit of air ace Group Captain Sir Douglas Bader. The emphasis is on challenging people with disabilities, talent building and creativity. The emphasis is on challenging people with disabilities, talent building and creativity.

Flying is one of the few activities where disabled people can participate to the same degree as an able-bodied person. The exhilarating experience rebuilds confidence and restores self-esteem. This, in turn, empowers people to explore their potential by extending their personal boundaries. In the air, we all fly at the same speed; nobody is disadvantaged or disabled.

Gautam Lewis CEO of Freedom in the Air, himself a disabled pilot with a Private Pilots License, Night Rating and an Instrument Meteorological Conditions Rating, (IMCR), organises Freedom Wings. Donald Putnam, Mike Willoughby and David Coulson (Head of Flight Training at Cranfield) along with Bonus Aviation form the flying team.

For the past 2 years we have been developing hand controls for pilots with lower limb disabilities with Cranfield University School of Aerospace Engineering. The hand controller is for use in Piper PA28 variants and Cessna 172 variants. We are now working with Aerodac, Aerospace Design and Certification company which is an approved design company by European Aviation Safety Authority (EASA). Once the hand controls are approved with a Supplement Type Certificate (STC), the units will be approved in all EASA member countries. Our combined goal is to see any disabled person have access to learning to fly with the availability of an approved EASA hand control.

