

Newton Derby has recently been involved in a refurbishment and test project of some of its components used on a legendary aircraft way back in the 1940s. Nearly 70 years on, how have they fared?



The DH.89 de Havilland Dragon Rapide, registration G-AHAG, was built in 1945 at the Brush Coachworks and saw service with the RAF as a de Havilland Dominie used for wireless operator training. It went on to see commercial service with Scenic Airways.

In the 1970's it was involved in an incident which made it un-airworthy and it was acquired in 1979 by Ralph Jones who was determined to return it to its former glory. Unfortunately, Ralph died before the restoration was completed but his son, Steve, is determined to realise his father's dream. He is supported in this work by a dedicated group of volunteers including Brian Steed and Brian Young.

The Dragon Rapide is equipped with a Marconi-Newton constant speed wind generator to provide electrical power. A small propeller on the generator shaft, mounted in the top wing, is driven by the airspeed to produce an electrical output to power the aircraft's navigation and radio equipment. This aircraft generator was first introduced in 1927 and has an ingenious but simple and reliable mechanism to maintain constant rotational speed regardless of wind conditions or aircraft speed.

A Newton automatic carbon pile regulator ensures that the voltage is regulated to tolerances unprecedented at the time.

The two Brians approached Newton Derby for any technical information we could offer to ensure the correct operation of the working generator and its spare. Very little was available for the generator but a manual was found for the carbon pile regulator. Wishing to assist with the restoration of the Dragon Rapide, Newton Derby volunteered to test the generators and complete any work necessary.

During testing it was obvious that the generators were still in perfect working order with no remedial work necessary.

Test Certificates were issued to prove the generators and voltage regulator were working to their original specification.

Newton Derby wish the Dragon Rapide restoration team every success with the project and look forward to seeing this magnificent aircraft flying once again.



G-AHAG rigged in workshop during early phase of refurbishment



Brian Young

Andy Bodkin
Production Supervisor

Brian Steed

