

CLASSIC DRIVER



1946 De Havilland Rapide - Short-haul Airliner

Short-haul Airliner

Lot sold	USD 111 073 - 166 610 GBP 80 000 - 120 000 (listed)	Lenkung	Links
Baujahr	1946	Zustand	Gebraucht
Zahl der Sitze	2	Standort	
Antrieb	Zweirad	Kraftstoff	Benzin
Losnummer	386	Außenfarbe	Sonstige

Beschreibung

1946 de Havilland Rapide Short-haul Airliner
Registration no. G-AIDL

Throughout history, only a handful of aeroplanes can claim to have introduced the public to flying. In the inter-war years, Sir Alan Cobham's flying circus and his fleet of Avro 504s gave a generation their first taste of aviation. After the Second World War the de Havilland Dragon Rapide took over that honour. Whether it was a scheduled flight with one of the fledgling airlines or a joy ride from an airfield, beach or paddock, the Dragon Rapide (and the earlier DH84 Dragon) plied its trade the length and breadth of the UK.

Today, the Classic Air Force fleet of Dragon Rapides continues with this tradition, providing another generation with the chance to sample biplane elegance. Flying in a Rapide takes you back to the glamorous age of early civilian aviation, when the wind whistled through the flying wires, everyone had a window seat and flying was an exotic activity.

The prototype DH89 took to the skies on 17th April 1934 as a successor to the DH84 Dragon and was, ostensibly, a scaled down twin-engined version of the four-engined DH86 Express. Although originally marketed as the Dragon Six, the name was soon changed to Dragon Rapide and the aircraft was most often simply referred to as the Rapide. Some 205 were produced before the outbreak of war, many of which were later impressed into military service to supplement the 500 or so ordered by the

RAF as the Dominie trainer and transport. Powered by two de Havilland Gipsy Six engines, the Rapide has a maximum speed of 157mph and a range of 573 miles.

After the war the Rapide was the backbone of many fledging airlines around the world and several hundred were still flying into the 1950s. Today, around a dozen survive in flyable condition and Classic Air Force, operated by Air Atlantique, has a pair Dragon Rapides in service with another undergoing renovation. In order to operate in the busy 21st Century airspace, the aircraft have been modified to include modern 'FM immune' radios and 'Mode S' transponders. European legislation also calls for the aircraft to be fitted with strobe lights, outside air temperature (OAT) gauges and a multitude of cockpit and cabin placards offering a variety of health and safety warnings.

They require a certain type of custodian, as not only do they demand a highly skilled pilot, they also require technical input from engineers versed in the world of wood, fabrics and 1930s technology. That said, and despite the fact that they getting on for 70 years old, these Dragon Rapides offer little in the way of grief and are among the most reliable aircraft in the Classic Air Force fleet. They also earn their keep both at 'home' in Coventry, offering scenic pleasure flights over the Warwickshire countryside, and at air shows around the UK and abroad. It seems the public still appreciates the chance to fly in these beautiful vintage aircraft some 75 years after they first flew.

'G-AIDL' was built under licence from de Havilland by Brush Coachworks of Loughborough in 1946. Ordered under Ministry of Supply Contract 6/Aircraft/5072/C20a, the Rapide was allocated the RAF serial number 'TX310'. Although issued to de Havilland Aircraft Holdings in May 1946, the aircraft did not take up the UK civil registration 'G-AIDL' until August 1946 when it was acquired by Eric Gander-Dower, who traded as Allied Airways in Dyce, Scotland. Named 'The Wanderer', the aircraft was used mainly as personal transport for Gander-Dower. While at de Havilland's facility at Witney in the early 1950s, the aircraft was seized by the High Sheriff of Oxfordshire and together with a spare engine, was sold at auction to Goodhew Aviation of Kidlington, Oxford.

'G-AIDL' was then acquired by aircraft sales broker W S Shackleton and almost immediately sold to Fox's Glacier Mints Ltd. Fox's based it at Rearsby, Leicestershire for the next 11 years and used it as a company 'hack'. During this time the aircraft was converted to Mark 6 standard. In 1961 the aircraft transferred to Andrew Flatley and operated from Halfpenny Green airport near Wolverhampton. In April 1962 ownership passed to The Midlands Spinning Company Ltd. They operated the Rapide from Halfpenny Green until January 1967 and two months later it was sold to Major Gerald Stacey, Trustee of the assets of the Army Parachute Association. The aircraft was moved to Netheravon, Wiltshire where it was used as a jump platform (alongside 'G-AGTM') for the next ten years.

In June 1977, the Rapide was sold to Southern Joyrides and operated by Mike Hood for a further ten years. Purchased in 1987 by Ray Mackenzie-Blyth (trading as Snowdon Mountain Aviation) the aircraft moved to Caernarfon, North Wales and was used for pleasure flying. SMA was subsequently renamed Air Caernarfon.

Air Caernarfon, together with 'G-AIDL', was purchased by the Air Atlantique group in the early 1990s and although initially remaining with Caernarfon, the aircraft was subsequently relocated to Coventry. Today the aeroplane flies in a Royal Air Force colour scheme and carries its original serial number 'TX310'. It is fully approved for passenger flying.

The aircraft is in airworthy condition and is due for its next annual check on 18th February 2016. Its airworthiness review certificate expires 10th September 2015. We are advised that the port engine has 'clocked up' 513 hours and the starboard engine 207 hours. There are 5,437 hours on the airframe.

Please note, if the aircraft remains in the EU, VAT of 20% will be added to the sale price. The Aircraft will be flown back to base at Coventry following the sale. Purchasers are to make arrangements to collect the aircraft within 21 days of the auction.

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