

# ROCKING UP

**W**hen Dan Gay and his Long EZ rock into the air above Great Yarmouth it's very familiar territory for Dan.

He's the local pilot – running a music shop and teaching business in Great Yarmouth and he learnt to fly 14 years ago at Seething Airfield, a few miles away. He and his unusual looking Rutan Long EZ (pronounced long easy), fly from Seething, and Dan loves displaying.

"My first display was at an Armed Forces Day at Cleethorpes where I later learned the crowd included a member of the royal family (the Duke of Kent) – which was quite a buzz on your display debut."

His aircraft was designed by pioneering Burt Rutan, whose other striking creations have included the Virgin Galactic spaceliner and the Voyager which, in 1986, was the first plane to fly around the world without stopping or refuelling.

The Long EZ features a lift-boosting mini "canard" wing – which can be seen on hi-tech military planes including the Typhoon fighter – as well as airflow-enhancing "winglets", now commonplace on the wingtips of most airliners.

"I hope people enjoy seeing the unusual lines of the Long EZ," says Dan, who is an international music examiner for Rockschoo and teaches drums at Caister High School and Ormiston Venture Academy in Great Yarmouth.

"I have always loved planes – from making flying models as a

*Designed by the man behind the Virgin Galactic spaceliner and the round the world Voyager, the Long EZ is a remarkable aircraft.*



Picture: TMS Media

## "I HOPE PEOPLE ENJOY SEEING THE UNUSUAL LINES OF THE LONG EZ"

Picture: Mike Page



### STATISTICS

**ROLE:** fuel efficient long range flight

**DESIGNED BY:** Aerospace engineer Burt Rutan

**ENGINE:** 1 x Lycoming O-235 engine, 115 hp (86 kW)

**MAXIMUM SPEED:** 205 mph

**LENGTH:** 16 ft 10 in (5.12 m)

**CREW:** one pilot

**Above:** The Long EZ in flight

**Left:** Dan Gay and his Long EZ.

**Below Right:** The Long EZ rests on its nose on the ground.

child – but never thought I would own one, let alone fly one in a show over my town, which is a real cherry on the cake," he explains.

People wandering along Great Yarmouth seafront in the lead up to the show may have grabbed a sneak preview of his display as Dan practised the aircraft's twists

and turns between the piers.

Mr Gay is not the first flyer in his family.

"My granddad Phil Gay was a policeman in Great Yarmouth. In the First World War he was a bomb aimer – throwing bombs off the plane by hand," he says.

The Long EZ has the engine at the back and the pilot sits in a

semi-reclined seat and controls the Long-EZ by means of a side-stick, situated on the right-hand console.

His Long EZ, G-MUSO, was hand made and built by musicians Barry Castle and Mike Moran, who worked with Queen and other big names.

"The Long EZ is an excellent and extremely fun aircraft to fly. It has 10 hours endurance and is very fast, economically cruising at around 160mph with a top speed of around 210," says Dan, pointing out that while it only has a 115 hp engine it can cruise almost twice as fast as other aircraft with the same engine.

While highly manoeuvrable, it is not licensed for aerobatics in the UK. Dan is the founder of the UK EZ group which hosts an international meet at Seething each year. ●



Picture: TMS Media