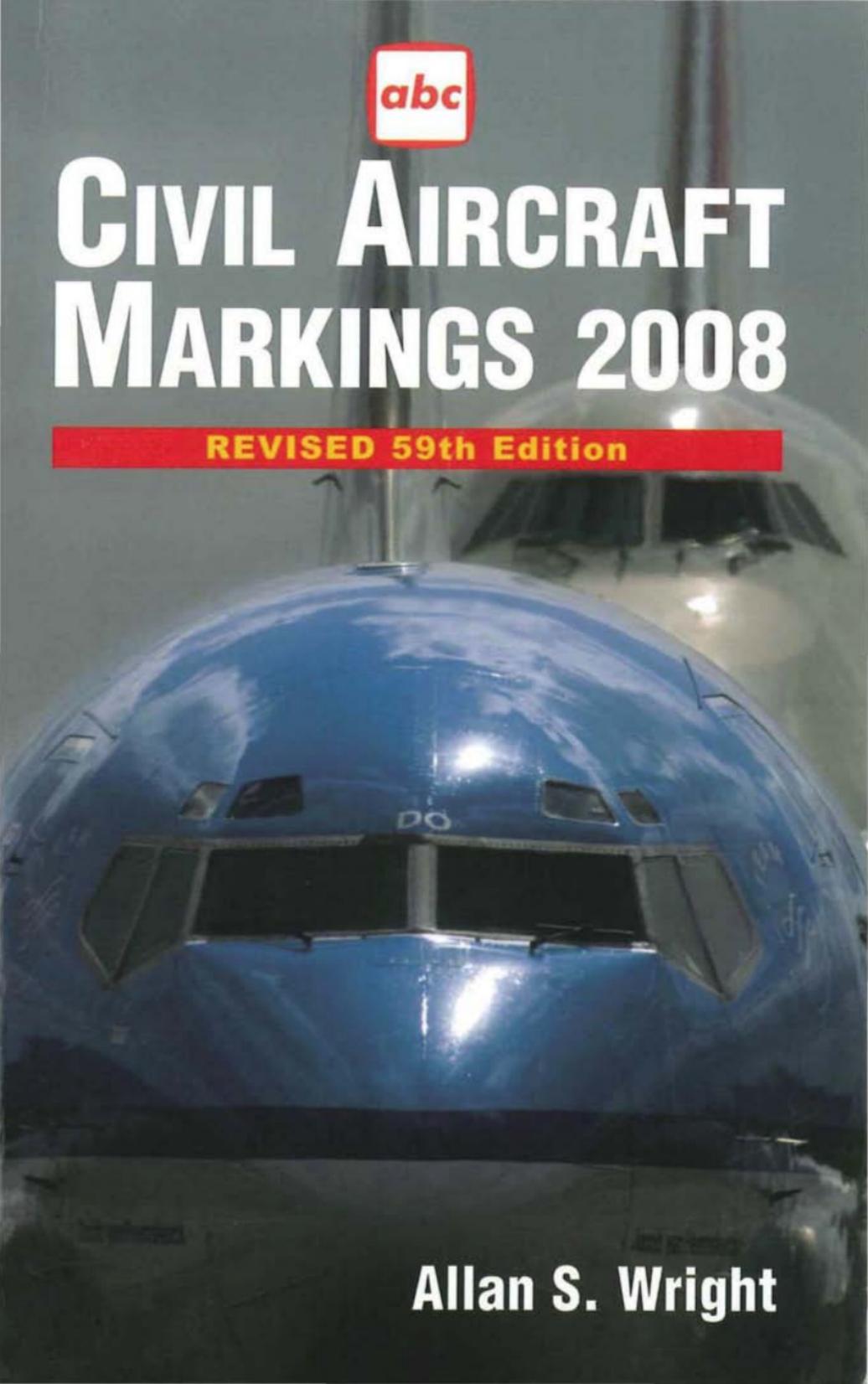




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A close-up, front-facing view of a blue aircraft cockpit. The nose cone is highly reflective, showing highlights from the camera flash. The cockpit windows are visible, with the letters 'DO' printed on the upper part of the windshield. The background is slightly blurred, showing another aircraft behind it.

Allan S. Wright

Contents

Introduction	4
International Civil Aircraft Markings	6
Aircraft Type Designations & Abbreviations	10
British Civil Aircraft Registrations	13
Military to Civil Cross-Reference	311
Republic of Ireland Civil Registrations	317
Overseas Airliner Registrations	333
Radio Frequencies	418
Airline Flight Codes	419
BAPC Register	421
Future Allocations Log	426
Future Allocation Groups	427
Overseas Airliners Registration Log	428
Addenda	430

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Introduction

The familiar 'G' prefixed four letter registration system was adopted in 1919 after a short-lived spell with serial numbers commencing at K-100. Until July 1928 the UK allocations were issued in the G-Exxx range but, as a result of further international agreements, this series ended at G-EBZZ, the replacement being G-Axxx. From this point registrations were issued in a reasonably orderly manner through to G-AZZZ, the position reached in July 1972. There were, however, two exceptions. In order to prevent possible confusion with signal codes, the G-AQxx sequence was omitted, while G-AUxx was reserved for Australian use originally. In recent years however, individual requests for a mark in the latter range have been granted by the Authorities.

Although the next logical sequence was started at G-Bxxx, it was not long before the strictly applied rules relating to aircraft registration began to be relaxed. Permission was readily given for personalised marks to be issued, incorporating virtually any four-letter combination, while re-registration also became a common feature – a practice almost unheard of in the past. In this book, where this has taken place at some time, all previous UK identities carried appear in parenthesis after the operator's/owner's name. For example, during its career JetRanger G-LSPA has also carried the identities G-BEHG, G-GGCC, G-XXII and G-INVU.

Some aircraft have also been allowed to wear military markings without displaying their civil identity. In this case the serial number actually carried is shown in parenthesis after the type's name. For example Auster 6A G-ARRX flies in military colours as VF512, its genuine previous identity. As an aid to the identification of such machines, a conversion list is provided.

Other factors caused a sudden acceleration in the number of registrations allocated by the Civil Aviation Authority in the early 1980s. The first surge followed the discovery that it was possible to register plastic bags, and other items even less likely to fly, on payment of the standard fee. This erosion of the main register was checked in early 1982 by the issue of a special sequence for such devices commencing with G-FYAA. Powered hang-gliders provided the second glut of allocations as a result of the decision that these types should be officially registered. Although a few of the early examples penetrated the current in-sequence register, in due course all new applicants were given marks in special ranges, this time G-MBxx, G-MGxx, G-MJxx, G-MMxx, G-MNxx, G-MTxx, G-MVxx, G-MWxx, G-MYxx and G-MZxx. It took some time before all microlights displayed an official mark but gradually the registration was carried, the size and position depending on the dimensions of the component to which it was applied.

There was news of a further change in mid-1998 when the CAA announced that with immediate effect microlights would be issued with registrations in the normal sequence alongside aircraft in other classes. In addition, it meant that owners could also apply for a personalised identity upon payment of the then current fee of £170 from April 1999, a low price for those wishing to display their status symbol. These various changes played their part in exhausting the current G-Bxxx range after some 26 years, with G-BZxx coming into use before the end of 1999. As this batch approached completion the next series to be used began at G-CBxx instead of the anticipated G-CAxx. The reason for this step was to avoid the re-use of marks issued in Canada during the 1920s, although a few have appeared more recently as personalised UK registrations.

Another large increase in the number of aircraft registered has resulted from the EU-inspired changes in glider registration. After many years of self-regulation by the British Gliding Association, new gliders must now comply with EASA regulations and hence receive registrations in the main G-Cxxx sequence. The phasing-in of EASA registration for the existing glider fleet is likely to be a long and problematic process.

September 2007 saw the issue of the 50,000th UK aircraft registration with G-MITC being allocated to a Robinson R44 Raven. The CAA revealed that at the time of its issue the Register consisted of 19,281 aircraft with the single most numerous type being the Piper PA-28 of which there were 1,048 examples.

Throughout the UK section of the book, there are instances when the probable base of the aircraft has been included. This is positioned at the end of the owner/operator details preceded by an oblique stroke. It must of course be borne in mind that changes do take place and that no attempt has been made to record the residents at the many private strips. The base of airline equipment has been given as the company's headquarters airport, although frequently aircraft are outstationed for long periods.

Non-airworthy and preserved aircraft are shown with a star ★ after the type.

The three-letter codes used by airlines to prefix flight numbers are included for those carriers most likely to appear in or over the UK. Radio frequencies for the larger airfields/airports are also listed.



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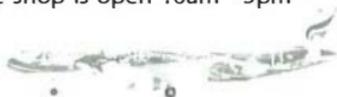
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