



# Heathrow's signal jammer brings down drone protest

Paralympian who held his device aloft among activists arrested as airport thwarts attempt to disrupt flights

By Jamie Johnson

PROTESTERS attempted to bring Heathrow airport to a standstill yesterday by flying drones in restricted airspace, but their plan, much like their remote-controlled flying vehicles, never really got off the ground. Thwarted by a new multi-million pound military grade anti-drone system, one man resorted to simply removing the batteries and holding his contraption in the air. He then sat down in a Costa Coffee, called police, and was arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to cause a public nuisance.

James Brown broke down in tears before he handed himself in to the authorities. As farcical as his protest was, he said he feared prison, but added that was a price worth paying if more people woke up to the climate crisis.

The 54 year-old Northern Irishman

**7** The number of pre-emptive arrests made by the Metropolitan Police ahead of the protests at Heathrow airport yesterday

is partially sighted, and had to be guided from his table inside Heathrow's Terminal 2 towards a group of waiting officers, many holding guns. He said, hours earlier, he had joined in the "Heathrow Pause" drone protest against a third runway at the airport. Mindful of his poor sight, Mr Brown

thought it may have been difficult to fly the small contraption safely and did not want to put anyone at risk. His passive act of aggression, he says, was still illegal if done within the designated three-mile airport exclusion zone, and so he offered himself up to the officers.

Illuminated by photographer's flashes, Mr Brown was handcuffed while clinging to his white cane and led through Departures towards a police van outside. Passengers queuing for an Air China flight looked bewildered.

A Paralympic bronze medalist in tandem cycling at the London Olympics, Mr Brown was one of five people held yesterday on suspicion of conspiracy to cause a public nuisance.

There was little nuisance caused. Heathrow ran a full schedule of flights.

Heathrow Pause, a splinter group of climate activists Extinction Rebellion, wanted to bring the airport to a standstill by flying drones within the exclusion zone. Their first attempt, live-streamed on social media, ended prematurely due to "a technical glitch" they said was caused by a signal jammer. After the Gatwick drone chaos last December, Heathrow had invested millions of pounds in a weapons grade anti-drone system.

Although the specific technology used at Heathrow has not been disclosed, one possible system, developed by Israel, is called the Drone Dome and can track devices up to six miles away, blocking the signal between the operator's remote control and the device.

Yesterday, it appeared that police also used helicopters and drones of their own to hunt the protesters. The overwhelming show of strength was simply too much. Of three attempted flights in the morning, only one drone actually took off.

The group claimed to have as many as 35 people willing to risk a prison



An activist prepares a drone, above, for protests that resulted in a number of arrests, left, top left. Extinction Rebellion members at London Fashion Week

sentence by flying a drone, but that reality never materialised.

At 6pm, there was one more attempt, this time in the middle of woodland. The drone was tethered to the ground so as not to fly above head height. Again, no flights were grounded.

Heathrow Pause had suffered setbacks after seven pre-emptive arrests on Thursday. Suspected would-be pilots - including Roger Hallam, the Extinction Rebellion co-founder - were taken into custody, with one member apparently bitten by a police dog.

Yesterday, a group spokesman said: "The real objective was always to trigger a sensible, honest conversation,

throughout society, on the dangerous folly of Heathrow expansion."

A spokesman for Heathrow Airport said: "We agree with the need for climate change action, but illegal protest activity designed with the intention of disrupting thousands of people is not the answer."

Extinction Rebellion were also active yesterday, with five activists gluing themselves to a building hosting the London Fashion Week table show. Others covered the ground and their clothes in fake blood, claiming that the fashion world had "blood on its hands" for running an industry more polluting than shipping and air travel combined.

## Army combat vehicles could be electric in three years

By Dominic Nicholls  
DEFENCE AND SECURITY  
CORRESPONDENT

THE Ministry of Defence has announced it will have a prototype of an electric combat vehicle within three years, as part of an eco-friendly drive that paves the way for "green" tanks.

It comes after General Sir Mark Carleton-Smith, the head of the Army, said on Thursday that the current fleet of military vehicles could be the last generation to rely on fossil fuels.

The £32million project, led by the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL), will explore vehicle technology to boost the performance of future combat vehicles.

A key focus will be electric drive systems for tanks and robotic vehicles.

William Suttie, one of the scientists leading the research said: "Electric drive systems have the potential to substantially increase fuel efficiency in our combat vehicles, reducing the Army's carbon footprint. When paired with other renewable solutions such as embedded solar panels, this technology has the potential to deliver significant cost and environmental benefits."

Gary Aitkenhead, the head of DSTL, announced a partnership this week to produce a prototype vehicle with the UK technology company QinetiQ.

So far, electric batteries have been unable to produce the power to move tanks and been limited to smaller vehicles, but advances in renewable energy sources now make it more realistic.

Tony Diver: Page 22

## Manchester Arena bombing intelligence to stay secret

By Daily Telegraph Reporter

KEY intelligence material about the Manchester Arena bombing must be kept secret otherwise it could "assist terrorists", a coroner has ruled.

Sir John Saunders has granted applications by the Home Office and police for public interest immunity (PII) on the grounds of protecting national security.

Part of last week's pre-inquest review hearing into the deaths of 22 people at the end of an Ariana Grande concert on May 22 2017 was held in private to consider the PII applications over material related to the issue of whether the attack by suicide bomber Salman Abedi could have been prevented by the authorities.

Yesterday, retired High Court judge

Sir John published an open ruling in which he said: "I have upheld the claims for PII by both the Secretary of State and CTP (Counter Terrorism Policy North West).

"I have done that because I am satisfied, having heard the justifications for them, that to make public those matters would assist terrorists in carrying out the sort of atrocities committed in Manchester and would make it less likely that the Security Service and CT police would be able to prevent them.

"I will, of course, keep this ruling under review."

John Cooper QC, representing a number of the families, told the coroner that the people making the application "are the very people who could potentially be severely criticised, and the ramifications are significant".

## Asda leads supermarkets in cutting price of petrol by 3p

BRITAIN'S biggest supermarkets are to reduce petrol prices by 3p after a fall in wholesale costs.

Asda cut the price of a litre of petrol to £1.23 yesterday, followed by Tesco, Sainsbury's and Morrisons also pledging to take 3p off in the coming days.

It comes as MPs call for an independent fuel price watchdog called "Pumpwatch" following accusations that fuel retailers are increasing their profit margins at the expense of motorists. Average UK petrol prices have remained virtually unchanged at around £1.25 per litre since mid-July, with diesel at £1.32.

Dave Tyrer, a senior fuel buyer for Asda, said: "With wholesale costs falling, we're pleased to be able to pass these savings on to our customers."

Luke Bosdet, AA's fuel price spokes-

**£1.23**

The new price of a litre of petrol at Asda filling stations, following the 3p reduction introduced yesterday

man, said the cut would "cheer up drivers as the summer comes to an end". Simon Williams, of the RAC, said: "This is a very welcome but long overdue cut. Drivers have been paying more than they should have for weeks due to savings in the wholesale price which retailers failed to pass on.

"Currently, unleaded is £1.28 a litre on average around the UK, so this will help to move it towards £1.25, saving drivers more than £1.50 every time they fill up."

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