FLYING FARMERS ASSOCIATION

December 2025 newsletter no. 150



CHAIRMAN'S RAMBLINGS

Yet another year of extremes. As far as climate change goes, I say bring it on! Maybe not every farmer's view depending on circumstances, but personally, thank goodness we had the perfect harvest weather.

I say this because, if you read my last Ramble, on the first day of harvest this year, we had a grain store fire taking out our floor drying facility. The NFU Mutual have been brilliant and suggested we sell all the corn straight off at spot prices, as although it was mainly dry, the temperatures were too high for storage and we couldn't cool it. So for the first year ever, by early September we didn't have a corn or bean left on the farm.

This would have been detrimental to pricing as we have storage to take advantage of higher prices in the following March/April/May. But as we normally hold the corn, they paid the difference between the spot price and the futures price.

I am writing this 24 hours after Ms Reeves presented the budget. Most of it had already been drip fed to us over the previous two months, so there were no surprises. All I can say is that she has to go, but unfortunately I fear she will be with us until she has totally wrecked the country.

My worry is, that as our country loses value, our businesses will get taken over by, for example – the Chinese. We have seen how they moved into Africa, investing in their ports and road systems so they could ship rare earth minerals back to China. They now have control of a very large percentage of these minerals worldwide, which are part of every computer, telephone and anything with a chip, down to the smallest components in every machine we have. Scary!

I have also noticed an influx of Chinese cars on the roads. Next will be Chinese tractors, combines and even aircraft. After all they did buy Mooney Aircraft a while ago as well as Cirrus, Diamond Aircraft and Continental. They have also bought out Lotus, MG and even LEVC that produces the iconic London black cabs. They can be quite innovative. For example, Zoomlion have copied a Lexion combine and shown it at Agritecnica. The difference is that all the drives like drum, fan, transmission etc are being driven by electric motors, with power generated from a diesel engine. This eliminates belts, pulleys, chains, hydraulic pipes etc and consequently virtually maintenance free. And it comes at an attractive price. Reliability, longevity and performance are yet to be proven. Apparently, they were just one of several hundred Chinese exhibitors at the show!

The AGM in late September was well attended with a good venue at Charles Courses' Elmsett Airfield. We held the meeting in his very large Cessna 206 hangar. But there was a problem with the acoustics (we set traps and put poison down but to no avail!) Unfortunately, we had many complaints about difficulty in hearing and I must apologise for this. We should have had a sound system, especially as most of us have impaired hearing now! Neville has already rectified this by looking into speaker systems for the Tour Talk microphones and earpieces. He didn't think they would be necessary on the day, but we will be prepared for the future.

The buffet lunch was superb and we were free to inspect the other hangars on the airfield. We soon found that they were full of Charles' large collection of vintage tractors and combines. A great day, thanks to Charles.

Paul Stephens

Date For Your Diary
The spring committee meeting for the 11th March. More details will follow nearer the time. Venue TBC.

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Joined Since April 2025

8846 J.B. Biggin from Dorset

Departing Members

546	J.R. Gibson Fleming	Passed away
8832	R. Butler	Passed away
8789	G. Ferriman	Lapsed
8764	J. Barnes	Lapsed
616	J.D. Jewitt	Lapsed
685	J.M. Jones	Lapsed
842	H. Pelham	Lapsed
856	C. Dawes	Lapsed
8535	A.J. Silvester	Lapsed
8584	D. Hearn	Lapsed
8667	R. Pearson	Lapsed
719	G.A. Humphreys	Lapsed

Obituary Richard Butler, 1944 – 2025

We are very sorry to announce that Associate Member Richard Butler passed away on the 4th August after a 15-year battle with prostate cancer.

Richard was a very keen member and supporter of the Flying Farmers, attending many UK visits, but the highlight of his flying year was, for several years, the flying Farmer European tours. A few of his most memorable flights would include an epic crossing of the Alps at the start of the Italian Tour, a very marginal crossing of the Pyrenees at the start of the Spanish tour and beautiful flights home from Elba at the end of the Italian tour and from Elblag, east of Gdansk, at the end of the Poland Tour.

Richard first learnt to fly aged 18 with the RAF at the Northumbrian University Air Squadron, flying the Chipmunk, while studying Dentistry. Flying was an important part of the rest of Richard's life. He spent many years flying as one of the jump pilots at Weston on the Green, flying the turbine Islander. He loved formation flying in his younger years with the Tiger Club and later as an instructor at the North Weald Formation School, usually flying the YAK 52. When not flying, sailing was a great passion, often sailing with friends in the Solent and in the Mediterranean. He was a devout Christian and a great support to his local parish church.

He joined the RAF as a Dental Officer. He had a very successful career ending as the boss of the Dental Branch in the rank of Air Commodore. His success was a testament to his great attention to detail, his supreme intelligence, a natural ability to organise but, perhaps most importantly, he was just a thoroughly likeable fellow who would go out of his way to be friendly to all those that he met.

After his service career he continued to practice dentistry, specialising in denture work. He also acted as an expert witness where his clear incisive mind, an ability to clearly communicate, and a great sense of fair play, made him the 'go to' expert for many barristers involved with dental cases.



Richard was a great family man, leaving his wife, Sue, two sons and four grandchildren on whom he doted. He was a close and loyal friend. He will be greatly missed by all of us who were privileged to have known him.

David Keene.

Announcement Trudi Brombacher

Those that took part in the FFA European Tours in the 1990's and 2000's will remember Werner and Trudi Brombacher. Werner was an extremely enthusiastic Bavarian motor glider and glider pilot until he had to hang up his goggles. He helped us with the tours in that era and often joined us, keeping us all amused with his stories, his unique style of dealing with ATC, his tunes he could get out of any random leaf and of course his "oohy" stick (not sure how you spell that!).

Trudi, his wife was an amazing partner for Werner and was a friend of us all. Unfortunately she died recently. Werner will be heart broken. As a thank you for his dedication to the FFA and so that he can continue to keep in touch with his many friends in the Association, the Committee have agreed to make him an Honorary member so that he can receive the newsletters, which I know he loves to read as I used to share mine with him when I was the editor.

Paul Stephens



Werner and Trudi back row, second and third from the left at the Class combine factory

IMPORTANT Membership Matters

Flying Farmers Emails.

In recent months 10 members have had their emails returned most likely because they have changed email address without telling us but sometimes because their email server has inadvertently put FFA on their spam list. Similarly, 31 members have unsubscribed from receiving FFA emails. Sometimes members click the unsubscribe button by mistake but it can happen that members are unsubscribed by the system for no reason.

We now use emails to send you important regulatory information, requests from members and most importantly, details of events and booking links. 65% of our membership routinely open emails and while we contact those whose emails are undelivered we can do nothing about those that go to spam or an unused inbox. If you are not getting regular emails from info@ffa.org.uk and you want them then please contact us on the website, email info@ffa.org.uk or call 01303 874251. If you don't want them, unsubscribe at the bottom of any email or contact us as above.

Treasurer's Telegraph

More on PMD's
Putting together a number of anecdotal stories from members, the following conundrum appears. A number of AME's have suggested, when a class two has failed or is likely to fail, (particularly stress ECG) that the applicant simply applies for a PMD.

It's also said that if an applicant fails the class 2 medical, or has an existing class 2 restriction (particularly "with safety pilot only") they can't just apply for a PMD to get around it.

If the same person, believing themselves to be fit for the purposes of a PMD, and having never entered the class 2 appraisal system, so applied, then none of the above would apply.

So what is the situation?
If you fail a Class 2 medical, you can still make a Pilot Medical Declaration, provided you don't have a disqualifying condition and aren't aware of any reason you can't meet the PMD requirements. A failed Class 2 doesn't automatically prevent holding a PMD.

You can't make a PMD if you have conditions that impair safe flying, including insulin-treated diabetes, significant heart or neurological disease, epilepsy, serious psychiatric illness, drug or alcohol dependence, or medications/conditions that would fail DVLA Group 1 or Group 2 standards. A PMD requires meeting normal driving-licence health rules. There is a high degree of trust here as well as risk because if you are aware then insurance policies and estates may be at risk.

Halon Fire Extinguishers.
Further to the brief about the mandatory removal of Halon fire extinguishers by 31st December 2025 which was covered in an email to members last month – **Don't Panic**

The main problem is that replacement non-Halon are simply not available in the UK or the US. Engineering facilities have been scratching around trying to find some and my facility has had the delivery from the US put back 3 times. Further, if you read the blurb, many of these extinguishers are not recommended for release in confined spaces such as a cockpit. If that wasn't bad enough, the cost quoted to me was £1304 + VAT.

First things first, if you do have one then you should remove it. It is environmental legislation and the CAA have washed their hands of it. If you feel that a fire extinguisher is a vital item, cannot find a replacement and leave it in, do you expect DEFRA or the Environment Agency to ramp check your aeroplane anytime soon?

Having removed your Halon extinguisher, **does your aircraft need to carry a fire extinguisher at all?** Not necessarily. All non-commercial, non-complex light aircraft under 1200kg do not have to carry one at all. Whether that is a good idea or not is a personal choice.

What is the CAA position on this? No doubt they will continue to enforce the requirement to carry a fire extinguisher where stipulated. At the GAP meeting last week they were asked for their opinion on an EASA regulation NCO. IDE.A.160 where it says the required fire extinguishers shall be suitable for the type of fire likely to occur….and to minimise the hazard of toxic gas concentration in compartments occupied by persons. This suggests it might not have to be an aviation certified fire extinguisher or an automotive one, and rules out some of the suggested replacements.

The response was that they would probably go with the EASA steer but that they would let us know.

Met Office Aeronautical Visualisation Service (MAVIS)
The Met Office is developing a new visualisation system for aeronautical users. Public BETA testing is available. Sign-up and explore the features available here: mavis.metoffice.gov.uk

Handling a Trim Runaway.
Following recent accident reports published by the AAIB, the CAA wishes to advise pilots of aircraft equipped with electric trim of the current CAA Safety Guidance on handling a trim runaway event. I have electric trim and never really thought about it. When you think those two 737 Max's were brought down by trim runaway, probably good to have a look. To find the page Google "Trim runaways "– its top of the list – well for me anyway.

General Aviation Advisory Council
The GAAC remains an invaluable service available to GA Aerodromes faced with adverse planning applications and issues. In addition it can offer property related advice, such as assistance with leases. Since the disbanding of the CAA's Airfield Advisory Team (AAT), the GAAC stands alone in offering this expertise; initially without charge to the subject airfield.

With a new Chairman and head of Planning, Ann Bartaby, the organisation has certainly upped its game recently.

Issues and cases currently with the GAAC include (but are by no means limited to) the list below. It should be borne in mind that confidentiality is often key; whilst advice notes and Objections made by the GAAC are usually published online, not all their work can be. Currently, the GAAC is tackling:

- National Grid Pylon Routes - insufficient consideration of GA airfields has blighted NG's approach to the Norwich - Tilbury Route and other lines are planned all over the UK.
- The Development Consent Orders process is of immense concern and is used by applicants such as National Grid. This process leaves little time for representations to be made by airfields and often leads rapidly to a point where very costly counsel is required to 'fight' the scheme
- Solar farms - a great many examples of applications exist where the impact on the aerodrome is not properly considered, either in terms of obstacles, lack of space for EFATO's or potential for glint and glare. Early consultation has resulted in acceptable schemes allowing airfield and solar farm to co-exist; often such consultation is simply not collaborative and we have lodged multiple objections where the applicant is simply not listening.
- Housing allocations- we're objecting to a draft proposal for a new settlement which would replace a very popular GA aerodrome
- Obstacles and Safety Hazards - multiple cases include applications which would penetrate the safety surfaces which surround aerodromes.
- National Planning Policy Framework - we're proposing, in conjunction with the APPG for Aviation, small changes which would no longer categorise aerodromes as brownfield.

In addition Ann is, along with Louise Southern, the creator of the Strategic Aerodrome Network, producing considerable and well publicised work which will identify aerodromes of strategic importance. It is intended that this work will lead to proposals to Government to ensure that the resulting network enjoys far greater planning protections than at present. We have encouraged members to participate in this Strategic Aerodrome Network initiative in recent correspondence.

In the current climate, with aerodromes such as Nottingham Tollerton being lost and the disbanding of the AAT, the work of the GAAC is more vital than ever and can only be offered with the backing of the supporting organisations like us who generously provide funding.

Andrew Cragg

GASCo

General Aviation Safety Council

306th Meeting of GASCO Council on Wednesday 26th November 2025 by Zoom.

GA Fatal Accident Reports between April and October.
2025 has not been a good year! We were informed of 9 Fatal Accidents resulting in 12 fatalities. Full reports are available on the AAIB website under AAIB monthly bulletins.

A Just Culture was called for to encourage a free and frank reporting of near misses and other unsafe situations to aid future safety.

The CAA is promoting training and preflight consideration of PARTIAL power loss.

The hazard of Solar Farms under construction. The surrounding fence and posts not easily spotted (see photo above).

Landing or taxiing with the parking brake applied, a particular hazard for tailwheel aircraft, has been the cause of 2 recent ground incidents. Check the brake lever is fully off before taxiing and again in the pre landing check.



Restricted Area (Temporary)
RA(T) infringements have increased 130%! At two Aerobatic events this summer 4 aircraft infringed the Sywell RA(T) and 1 the Saltby RA(T). Check en route NOTAMs before you fly. A RA(T) is an absolutely prohibited area of airspace during the activation period. They are shown clearly on SkyDemon during live flight and when preflight planning, if you have the correct date/time of flight entered.

Alf Oliver

GASCo Safety Evenings

Henstridge
TBA - Friday 20th February 2026
Contact: TBA

Tatenhill
19:30 - Wednesday 11th March 2026
Contact: Mark Humphries,
Tel: 07376 963577/Email: mark@esfc.club
Further details on GASCO website:
https://www.gasco.org.uk/events/safety-evenings

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https://www.gasco.org.uk/flight-safety-magazine/subscribe



Air Racing Season 2025



Race 25 and Race 82 (the two FFA members) lined up for their staggered start at the Enniskillen races in August.

Two FFA members continue to participate in the exciting Royal Aero Club handicapped racing events staged over 5 weekends around the UK (A 3rd member was unable to race this year due to his aircraft being U/S all season).

For those who don't know, this is a great fun series of races open to anyone who has a minimum of 100 hours P1, and an aircraft that can maintain a minimum of 100 mph on full throttle. The handicapping system ensures that any of the participating aircraft has an equal chance of winning by staggering the start according to the aircraft's maximum speed. The race uses of a course of 80 to 90 miles in length consisting of between four and eight laps dependent upon the design, overflying the airfield on each lap, and the finish line being the airfield itself for the benefit of the spectators. This year for example, participating aircraft ranged from a Luscombe at the lower end of the speed scale to RV aircraft with nearly twice the Luscombe's speed, and yet the finish was never predetermined.

This year the last race of the season, racing for the King's cup at Wellsbourne airfield was the most contested race in the recent history of air racing with all 12 aircraft finishing within 42 seconds and the first 10 aircraft with only 20 seconds between them. That gives great credit to the handicapper.

To whet your appetite, have a look at the video clip on the Royal Aero club website. Go to www.royalaeroclubrrra.co.uk, click on the News tab and scroll down to, "Wellsbourne: the Final." In that report of the whole weekend's racing you will see reports on both races for the weekend and the positions gained, but most exciting of all near the bottom is a video clip of the finish showing all the aircraft on the final leg down from the final turn to the finish, and you will see what I mean by the word exciting!

And if you want to see more of what the racing is like from the perspective of the winning pilot, he has created a video of his race. Just type into YouTube: "Winning the King's Cup Air Race 2025"

Last year one of your members had a very successful season winning many of the trophies but had the glory taken away this year by a relative new boy who won many trophies including the Schneider trophy, the King's cup, and the British air racing championship – quite a haul! However, both of your members did manage to secure one win each and take home a silver trophy to be kept for a year.

It may sound like an elite group, but it is far from it and anybody who has a competitive streak in their body is encouraged to take part. It is fun, social, and gives the opportunity to use your aircraft for something other than the occasional trip for the hundred pound cup of coffee at the local airfield! The question of "is it safe?" often arises, but full safety briefings are given before every race and I would suggest that if you're happy driving down a motorway in the fast lane with everybody going the same way, then there is no more danger than with that.

Participants can race single crewed or with a navigator. A navigator can take some of the load off a pilot, particularly in the early stages of a racers career. One of us races, single crewed, and the other races with a navigator, so there's no hard and fast rule for anyone.

A race school is organised somewhere (usually at Popham Airfield) in April before the beginning of the season so that people can get an idea of what is involved and can practice with an experienced race pilot showing them the pros and cons and the tips to use. The races themselves take place in the second half of the months of May, June, July, August, and September at participating airfields around the country. One of your members is the organiser for getting airfields on board. An overnight stay at a local hotel is par for the course for the Saturday night with the social dinner involving all participants – some people even staying for the Friday night to settle in before the Saturday practice in the morning and the 1st race in the afternoon

The Sunday race finishes before lunch, and after the results are announced you collect your trophy (hopefully), and return home wondering why you hadn't been involved in racing years ago!

So come and join in! If you want to know anything more about it contact either Martin Gosling or Gordon Bellerby. Be warned - if you do join in, you will get hooked!

Martin Gosling
Gordon Bellerby

Calendar of Events 2026

14 – 19 April	Sun N Fun	Lakeland, FL, USA
22 – 25 April	AERO Friedrichshafen 2026	Friedrichshafen, Germany
15th - 16th May	Private Flyer Show	Wycombe Air Park, Bucks, UK
19 – 21 June	Real STOL Fest 2026	Breighton Airfiled, Yorkshire, UK
26 – 27 June	Private Flyer Show	Leeds East Airport UK
27 – 28 June	Festival of Flight Air Show	Shuttleworth, UK
20 – 24 July	Farnborough International Airshow 2026	Farnborough, UK
20 – 26 July	AirVenture 2026	Oshkosh, WI, USA
4–6 September	LAA Rally 2026	Leicestershire Aero Club, Leicester Airport, UK

Deadline for articles for the March newsletter is 14th March 2026

To help us to edit and produce the newsletter in a timely fashion ***please could the event organisers collect all write-ups including videos and pictures and provide all together*** within three weeks of the event taking place.
Please email newsletters@ffa.org.uk

Event organisers will now receive a newsletter check list as well as an event organisers guide when planning an event. This will just help editing the newsletter in knowing running order, expected write ups, photos etc..

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2026 Renewal - FLYING FARMERS – PRICING MATRIX

SECTION 1 and 3 – PREMISES and PRODUCTS LIABILITY
Limit of Liability (any one accident and in the aggregate in respect of Products Liability)

Annual Movements of Third Party Aircraft (See INFO in the last year renewal schedule)	**GBP500,000**	**GBP1,000,000**	**GBP2,000,000**	**GBP5,000,000**
Up 100	GBP517.00	GBP726.00	GBP858.00	GBP1,452.00
more than 100 up to 250	GBP583.00	GBP803.00	GBP924.00	GBP1,584.00
more than 250 up to 500	GBP655.00	GBP869.00	GBP990.00	GBP1,716.00
more than 500 up to 1,000	GBP869.00	GBP1,089.00	GBP1,188.00	GBP1,914.00
more than 1,000 up to 2,000	GBP1,018.00	GBP1,232.00	GBP1,320.00	GBP2,046.00
More than 2,000 to be agreed by slip leader	to be agreed by slip leader			

SECTION 2 – HANGARKEEPERS LIABILITY
Plus GBP259.00 for GBP500,000 any one accident, but limited to GBP75,000 any one aircraft.
Plus GBP517.00 for GBP1,000,000 any one accident, but limited to GBP75,000 any one aircraft.
Minimum premium in respect of mid term additions GBP190.00 in full, subject to AVN9A (applicable to the movements/limit banding).

If any members are interested further details can be obtained by contacting Gallagher directly (0800 612 3635).

Nb: Members might already be covered under their farm Public Liability insurance. PLEASE CHECK!

MEMBERS MISHAPS

ILAFFT (I Learnt About Flying From That)

A platform giving members the opportunity to submit any article about their flying career from which other members can benefit and learn from. If anonymity is required that will of course be respected.

At the beginning of this summer I had a 'prang'!







They say you 'live and learn'… Having learnt a great deal about insurance claims, I thought I'd share with you a few of the insights.

Betterment.
I spoke with many of my fellow pilots and the majority of them were unaware of the Betterment clause and what Betterment would mean to them when making an insurance claim. So I'd like to share with you a few learnings and encourage you to check your policy.

But first, I will give you a short summary to put into context what happened.

I landed at home after a great day's flying with friends, practicing short field landings and take-off's. The plane was shut down and as I got out, I heard someone in the yard (I was not expecting a visitor). So off I trotted to see who it was - all very harmless, but what happened when I returned to the plane was not…

As I walked up to the plane I could see a storm cloud edging towards me and I made the decision to pull the plane into the hangar. As I did this, the top 2cm of the propeller clipped the hangar - it goes almost without saying that I experienced total horror and at the same time, monumental anger at my carelessness. This minor clip, bent one blade of the propeller by about 5mm to 10mm.

Although visibly it was minor damage, the reality was catastrophic, as despite the fact that the engine was not running, it lead to a new propeller, an 'engine out' for a shock-load test and missing the most glorious summer's flying.

Why did this happen?
In retrospect, I believe that this occurred as I had broken my process… I was distracted by an unexpected caller at the house and this in turn, lead to breaking my normal well-rehearsed shut-down procedures; getting out of the plane, turning the propeller to the horizontal, washing the plane down, all before pulling it back into the hangar.

So what is Betterment all about?
On the positive side, I have learnt a lot about Betterment! Let me explain; if you have a propeller with a TBO of 2,000 hours and you have used the propeller for 1,000 hours (half of its life) this will mean you will only receive insurance cover payments for 50% of the like-for-like replacement cost of the new propeller.

So in summary, whatever use you have had from that propeller over its designated life span it will be deducted as, 'You have benefited from the use of it'. Please bear in mind a standard Hartzell 76' aluminium propeller will cost circa £20,000. So no Betterment cover will mean you'll need to find the balance to fund the cost.

Check your policy.
With some insurance policies Betterment is included for others policies it is a tick box and a premium payment. But the results of not having Betterment can be extremely expensive, so please check your policy.

Another potential hidden cost.
When making a claim you will receive an engine shock-load rebuild estimate from your engineer / maintenance shop to make your claim. But there's another part to be aware of - 'Deficiencies'. Deficiencies are the parts of the engine which need to be replaced but were not damaged by the 'Strike' but by general wear and tear. These can include; corrosion of tappet bodies, con-rods and many other internal parts. So, if your engine is on the old side replacing corroded parts may well be required. So it might be worth putting a 'Stash of Cash' to one side.

That was the past and a big learning for me. More importantly, I've got my plane back together, along with a new propeller and I'm enjoying my winter's flying.

Edmund Smiley-Jones.
Please take a look at my content on Instagram @HinterlandPilot

Corr, what a pilot!

Some years ago I flew into a hill strip which I had used before. It was a short strip, but in the C150 it is normally the take-off (getting off the ground in time) that worries me, and not the landing. The strip was on a slope, but the usual feisty headwind would still seem to favour landing "downhill". And so I did. Groundspeed was fine, but the brakes simply didn't have any effect. I forgot to mention the runway ended at a solid wall with a drop behind it.

For what seemed an eternity we slithered elegantly down what I now perceived to be the wet grass with shiny wet rocks set into it. Anything was preferable to an encounter with the wall and a drop into what, in my imagination, was infinity. So hard left or right (I won't say which, for identification purposes) in what might be construed as a rally turn. I was attempting to perform a "180" at speed. I didn't expect to stay upright. If it were a car it would surely have barrel-rolled away down the hill. It was a pleasant surprise to find that the aeroplane completed the turn impeccably, to climb back up the slope next to the runway and come to rest on the top of a small knoll. Some spectators (who had unknowingly risked their lives) burst into a round of applause! I taxied off the knoll and slunk away in shame...

I then remembered my helicopter training. The advancing (so faster) blade creates more lift than the retreating blade. The difference in lift from one side to the other caused Cierva's early autogyros to flip over. So as the aeroplane performed a 180 there was enough extra lift created by the outside wing to keep it upright despite the centrifugal forces. Technically this is probably a rubbish description, but the result seems to bear it out. Other descriptions are welcome!

Something similar happened to me on snow and ice on a certain glider strip. This time we ended up slight nose-down in a hollow. We clambered out and this feeble girl and 70 year old passenger slithered about on the ice to push it out of the hollow. No help arrived. Many saw, but none came, though I suppose they were 600+ meters away... Anyway the increased lift on the advancing wing saved me again, and I put the lack of assistance down to the fact that glider pilots are amazing people who take things in their stride and don't need help just to get a glider out of a hole. On another visit there someone simply swung the prop for me when the starter motor failed.

Chris Belton





Programme 2025/26



During 2024-2025 we had a number of the very popular Pop-ins, and more are planned for this coming winter. As I am sure you will have seen in the Newsletters, we've had another good year for "Events" including another overseas Tour. Looking ahead to next year, we have a full calendar.

A brief summary of these events is below.
The Tour for next year (2026) has been put together on home ground to allow those with restricted Licences to participate.

List of FFA Events (in the Pipeline) for 2026

- 11th March – London venue to be confirmed
- Date TBC – One day visit to Agri research Centre – Stebbing, Essex
- May 20th – 1st June – 2026 Tour of Scotland, Peter Gale /Jude
- Mid June TBC – Tanks and Farming (1 Day) – Weybourne, North Norfolk
- 30th June – 2nd July – Second Bosworth Wing Ding, Alf & Gill Oliver
- Date TBC – A visit to a Parachute Centre. The afternoon visit will be to a self-catering holiday accommodation and cabins, trading as Patty's Barn, where we can quickly have a look around. Then move on down the road to visit Cockerham Green Energy anaerobic digestion site, processing agricultural by-products and waste
- Date TBC – A working Lifeboat station on the Isle of Wight

As events and itinerary are confirmed, full details will be put on the Website and an email will be sent out.

Pop-Ins 2025/26. For all Pop-ins (unless otherwise announced) the intention is to meet at 12.00pm for lunch.

- November, Friday 14th. Leicester. (Postponed due to weather)
- December, Thursday 11th. Turweston. (EGBT)
- January, Friday 23rd. Halfpenny Green. (EGBO)
- February, Saturday 21st. Sherburn in Elmet. (EGCJ)
- March, Saturday 21st. White Waltham. (EGLM)
- April, date to be confirmed. Oaksey Park (EGTW) where we will have a very interesting speaker, "Air Chief Marshal Sir Glenn Lester Torpy,GCB,CBE,DSO," retired Royal Air Force Commander. Glenn will give a talk about his amazing career in the RAF.

***Please note that some of these dates may change but will be updated on the website.**

Events such as these are arranged by FFA members on a voluntary basis. It is accepted by those who participate that nothing undertaken by the FFA collectively or members individually shall be construed as establishing a duty of care nor in anyway removing or modifying the duties, responsibilities or obligations of pilots or land owners in relation to any event and attendance thereat. All information provided in these programmes is purely advisory and should ALWAYS be verified from official sources.

Following on from comments received after the Pop-In visit at Thruxton, the committee wish to remind members when attending Flying Farmers Association meetings / events the dress code should be at least smart casual.

Isle of Wight

2026 it is hoped to carry out a visit to the Isle of Wight more details will be on the website when they are firmed up
IT'S QUIZ TIME.
Q1. How many lifeboat stations are there on the Isle of Wight ?
Q2. How many of these are 'Independent' and funded as individual charities?
For a bonus point. Can you name the Independent ones?
Answers to Neville Stops (neville.stops@gmail.com)

If you happen to see anything in your area that would form the basis of an interesting FFA visit, then please contact Neville Stops (neville.stops@gmail.com) or Gordon Bellerby (gordon@jgbellerby.com)

The Committee and I would like to thank all the organisers for making these meetings possible, also those that have attended, in some cases driving 2-4 hours to get to that event. Sometimes we are called the Driving Farmers not the Flying Farmers!!

Eventbrite

When you book a place please fill in all sections, even if you put N/A. If coming by car, put this in under A/C, and the Reg under A/C reg. If you do not fill in all sections Eventbrite will not accept the booking.

If you are thinking of organising an event please contact either Gordon or Neville and they will send you the updated "Guide for Events Organisers".
Event Information: Joining instructions and attendee lists will go on the web site under that event.

Booking note: When booking on the home page next to general admission there is a drop down menu, please select how many people you are bringing.
Cancellation Policy: We have a strict Cancellation policy. All events will be going through Eventbrite, and up until the closing date you will be able pull out and get a refund, BUT after the closing date you will be committed for the full cost. This is because coaches need booking, caterers need advising, and hotel room numbers need confirming.
This Policy will stand unless there are people on the waiting list or you can find a replacement.

Pop-In, Henstridge 22nd October





Yesterday saw a fine turnout of 25 Flying Farmers members in 15 aircraft for our Pop In visit to Henstridge Airfield, a venue steeped in aviation history and surrounded by the beautiful Dorset–Somerset countryside. Despite a cool breeze, spirits were high as aircraft arrived throughout the morning, with pilots making good use of the clear skies and excellent facilities.

We were warmly welcomed by the Henstridge Airfield team, who provided us with parking on the main grass apron and an introduction to the site's history. Originally built during the Second World War as a Fleet Air Arm training base, Henstridge retains much of its heritage charm — but with all the amenities today's pilots appreciate. There is a concrete section in the main runway to simulate the deck of an aircraft carrier.

There was coffee, bacon rolls and paninis in the Airfield Café. We saw a fascinating mix of aircraft — from vintage classics to modern microlights all over the airfield. Members particularly enjoyed chatting with local pilots, and Neil Wilson the Chair of the based LAA Strut, who shared insights into the airfield's restoration projects and community flying activities. Henstridge Airfield was a wartime Fleet Air Arm training airfield designated HMS Dipper. Work started on the airfield in 1941, but it was not until April 1943 that it was Commissioned. Seafires, Spitfires, Typhoons and Masters operated here until the end of the war. Part of the main runway was marked out as an aircraft carrier deck and there was an arrestor wire system so pilots could practice deck landings for real! The airfield was also used for special photography missions using the G45 gun camera. Film was processed and analysed on-site. It was also used for recreational purposes, hosting amateur dramatic productions and sports days for off-duty personnel. After the war, the airfield became relief landing ground for RNAS Yeovilton, slowly running down until finally passing out of MOD ownership in 1957. In 1953 Alan Bristow established Air Whaling Limited at the airfield flying Dragonfly, Hiller and Westland S55 helicopters. In 1955 he set up Bristow helicopters Ltd, also at Henstridge operating four Widgeons in the Gulf on oil exploration. Bristows moved to Redhill in 1958. The MoD then sold the old airfield in lots but there has never been a time since commissioning in 1943 when flying in one form or another has not taken place at the airfield. Of the original five runways only one, 07/25 survives. It is a tarmac runway in good condition, 750m long by 26m wide. The Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance and the Yakovlevs formation display team are based at the airfield and The Wessex Strut of the LAA have been holding fly-ins here since the seventies. The airfield has become their adopted headquarters.

Lunch was a lively affair, with plenty of conversation about recent farm work, weather patterns, and flying adventures. A few members took the opportunity for local flights in the afternoon, taking in views of the Blackmore Vale before heading home. Our thanks go to the Henstridge Airfield staff for their warm hospitality and to all who attended for making it such an enjoyable day out. The camaraderie and shared passion for flying and farming were, as always, at the heart of the event.

If you have any ideas for a pop in to an interesting airfield near you, please speak to Neville Stops on 07860 937933 with your ideas. Organisation is simple, quick and easy. Usually a couple of phone calls and that's it.

We look forward to seeing everyone again at our next gathering — and to more blue skies ahead!

Roger Bell



51st AGM Meeting 25th September 2025





Andrew Cragg and the committee



Mike O'Donoghue of GASCO



Martin Robinson of AOPA

This year's AGM was held at Elmsett Airfield, courtesy of Charles Course.

We had two guest speakers for our well attended AGM this year and we were lucky to have two of the best known names in general aviation Mike O'Donoghue of GASCO and Martin Robinson of AOPA.

Our first speaker Mike based his talk on Helping us to fly longer and safer when we get older, sadly something which is becoming more relevant to most of the flying farmers whose average age is probably 65+. We were given a response pad and asked to respond to questions which Mike put up on the screen one was what age group we came under and we soon discovered that between 65 and 85 gained the highest score.

He spoke about how age affects us flying. First our eyesight deteriorates, then our hearing, especially farmers who have been exposed to various loud noise sources for years, shooting being one. He brought up mobility, or lack of, which as you get older makes access to some planes more difficult, and short term memory loss. He explained how we can overcome these by various means having a regular eye check-up, wearing good quality ear defenders doing certain exercise programs. He also suggested we fly with a friend in better flying conditions and maybe shorter flights. We then discussed the most common dangers of flying, engine failure seems to be the top occurrence in GA, low hours on type was another example of a cause of accidents, and then farm strip flying which as we all know has its own set of dangers with obstacles, short runways, wet grass, making it challenging. With another question on the screen the number one answer was weather, was the biggest worry when flying same as farming then.

Our second speaker was Martin Robinson of AOPA well known to most of our members, Martin said that AOPA was a membership organisation and relied on pilots joining and paying a subscription to help fight the threat to GA he then said this government had abandoned its previous pledge to support GA. The main threats were coming from loss of airspace, drone activity, and new medical regulations. He also brought up the subject of aerodromes being used for building development and often left in a neglected state

The most important point he made was, GA is part of the national aviation system and supports many businesses and people who are employed in various support roles like, avionics, engineering and training, which all help the economy. He also felt we are over regulated by the CAA with so much red tape, he used the cost sharing as a prime example of this, and lastly the cost to become a pilot was putting many young people off GA. So we all came to the same conclusion, we need people like Martin of AOPA to lobby the government on our behalf to help protect our right to fly.

Charlie Papworth



Charity Collection at the AGM for MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship)

MAF is a global Christian charity that provides humanitarian air services in Africa and beyond

Hi Roger,
Your gift of £306.40 has been gratefully received.
Thank you so much for your generous gift. Your support means that we can continue to serve some of the world's most isolated people in need. Together, we get to put smiles on thousands of faces every year as we ensure that our aircraft — and the partners we fly — meet a multitude of physical and spiritual needs.
Thank you for being part of the MAF family.
Best wishes
Ian Oliver
MAF UK

With Gift aid this made £383.06 from the membership in 30 minutes. A good effort I thought.

Roger Bell

Minutes of the 51st AGM Elmsett Airfield, 25th September 2025

Committee Members Present: Paul Stephens (Hon. Chairman), Andrew Cragg (Hon. Treasurer & Membership Secretary), Neville Stops (Hon. Events Secretary), Gordon Bellerby, Giles Abrey (Newsletter Editor), Alf Oliver & Rebecca Rayner. R. Stephens took the minutes

	Description	Action
	The meeting was opened by the Chairman at 11:00 hrs (local) The Chairman thanked everyone for coming and commented on the superb weather. He thanked Charles Course for allowing us to use his airfield and ran through some housekeeping.	
1	**Members Present** The President, The Committee as above, plus S. Beaty, R. Bell, C. Belton, P. Burtwistle, C. Course, R. Culley, M. Cuttell, P. Dobson, C. Elliott, C. Emery, P. Evans, R. Everson, T. Fisher, P. Gale, R. Giles, S. Goddard, R. Holt, E. Howard, R. Howard, T. Jarvis, A. Jeans, M. Jewers, A. Kedros, D. Keene (Zoom), W. Lee, P. Mailer, S. Martin, W. Miazek, J. Milne, J. Noble, R. Osborn, C. Papworth, P. Peal, W. Procter, G. Robson, T. Spencer, S. Tomson, F. Ward, S. Wills plus wives and partners respectively. In all 64 people attended.	
2	**Signing of the Minutes of the 50th AGM held at Sherburn in Elmet Aero Club, 25th September 2024** The minutes were signed as a true and correct record.	
3	**Any Matters arising from the Minutes** The action points had been dealt with. There were no matters arising.	
4	**Chairman's Report** The Chairman reported that the Association was thriving and financially sound. He said his job was made easy due to a very strong Committee and praised them for their dedication and work. He also thanked all the organisers of events and everyone for being a member of the FFA.	
5	**Treasurer's Report** The Treasurer ran through the 2024/2025 accounts. They showed that the increased subscription has now turned a small loss into a reasonable profit and there was £35,000 on deposit. He explained about the fly-in fund which was accrued from surpluses at events and held in case an organiser was 'out of pocket' through no fault of his own. R. Bell asked if the FFA took a commission from members taking out airfield insurance. Answer, no.	
6	**Events Report** The Events Secretary thanked Helen Cobb for organising a successful French Tour in May 2025. He went through the provisional programme for 2026. He did report slightly lower attendance at events.	
7	**Membership Report** The Membership Secretary showed Power Point graphs of the membership numbers over recent years which are still increasing. Presently there are 415 members. R.Culley asked if non flying members could remain in the FFA. Answer, members do not have to leave if they give up flying or retire from farming.	
8	**Election of Committee Members** It was the turn of A. Oliver and R. Rayner to stand down. They were both willing to stand again and were no objections to them continuing.	
9	**AOB** M. Cuttell suggested including aircraft details in the membership list, as do the Helicopter Club. The majority wished for this to happen, so it was agreed to look into it. T. Fisher thanked G. Abrey for doing a superb newsletter. P. Burtwistle said we should seek a landing site for Cereals. A. Oliver to do a Whatsapp group for the event. P.Stephens mentioned that if it is classed as an FFA event, then our liability insurance will cover the landing site for the day. M. Cuttell pointed out that 4 Border force officers had travelled from Dover to his landing site near Cheltenham. He also praised the Committee, as he had seen the FFA grow beyond recognition from when he first joined. There were a number of comments that they had difficulty hearing the speakers. This will be addressed in the future. A.Cragg mentioned fire extinguishers in aircraft. Dry powder will be ok, but the cost of approved liquid ones is extortionate. Possibly only necessary in aircraft over 1200 kilos. A. Oliver made an appeal to support the Mission Aviation Fellowship to train a UK pilot. R. Bell handed a cap round and raised £383.00. R. Bell thanked our host C Course for everything he has laid on for the meeting.	Committee AO NS
10	**Close the Meeting** The meeting was closed at 12:06. Minutes approved at a subsequent AGM	

The Hebrides had other plans...

When the weather wins – FarmStripFlying's adventures begin!

Ed Smiley-Jones AKA @HinterlandPilot



Above main picture: Ed and Rory enjoyed some low level sightseeing in their Supercub!
Opposite top left: The group enjoyed sharing stories over some great food at Glenforsa, including freshly caught seafood
Opposite top right: Despite the earlier weather frustrations, the group enjoyed some sunshine on Saturday afternoon whilst flying around Mull.
Opposite lower left: Lining up ready to Depart Glenforsa on Saturday Morning:
Opposite lower right: The Northern Coast of Iona. The group enjoyed some beautiful sights, including seals and cattle roaming the beach.

Matt asked me to write an article about our flying trip to the Scottish Hebrides, but we all know what happens to the best laid plans and certainly plans had to change, (but it's not what I thought I'd be writing about as the planned trip was somewhat altered) due to the micro-climates of the West coast of Scotland.

So what's this article going to be about? A review of the trip, a celebration to our valiant pilots and passengers, and a few insights if you wanted to go it alone in the Scottish Hebrides.

A bacon butty and a cuppa…

Matt and I started talking about a flying trip to Scotland at the beginning of 2025 over a cuppa and a bacon sandwich at Croft Farm. At the time, the idea was sound, we knew the routes and many of the airfields and farm strips we wanted to visit. The routes would give every pilot a sense of fun, adventure and accomplishment, along with camaraderie by meeting other like-minded aviators. A fantastic environment to learn from each other and make long-term friends.

Hours of planning, phone calls and e-mails went into selecting and obtaining permissions from airfield managers, farmers and local authorities notwithstanding organising food, camping and showers for all!

The WhatsApp group was hot with activity once Matt announced the trip to the Outer Herbrides, the take-up was overwhelming and enthusiastic… all down to the loyalty of the pilots from previous trips! In the end we had 20 people and 13 planes – it would have been a magical 14, but unfortunately I'd pranged my propeller on the barn and the Aviat Husky was out of action for this trip!

Are you calling an emergency?

Our first rendezvous was Glenforsa Hotel on the Isle of Mull which was also our basecamp for the weekend. Glenforsa Hotel is set back from the Sound of Mull – a beautiful sea inlet that goes from the Atlantic towards Oban. The hotel is an authentic log cabin style building with a most incredible 780m NE / SW grass strip which separates the Sound of Mull from the hotel. The strip is manicured and well drained and suitable for light sports aircraft, caravan style and backcountry planes. Authentic camping is allowed under the wing of your plane – it's an aviator's dream scenario.

The hotel is owned by Brendan and Alison Walsh who are an extremely aviation friendly team, having run the Intrepid Aviation Company for Dave Gilmore (Pink Floyd) at North Weald, looking after his many vintage planes. On this note, Dave Gilmore owned a Beech Staggerwing (a photo of which is proudly displayed in the Glenforsa reception).





However, what many didn't know is one of our pilots Ed Parkin is the new owner of this very same plane… what a coincidence that was! I believe Brendan had a few stories to share about that plane's past and flying nuances with Ed.

Twelve planes, pilots and passengers arrived safely with no dramas on route, except for one… Arthur! Unfortunately, Arthur had a fuel value issue where he couldn't transfer gas from his reserve to the main tank, this resulted in an unexpected detour and AvGas top-up at Prestwick Airport.

What a sight to see, a little J3 Cub surrounded by Ryanair's and Jet2's Airbus and Boeing fleet planes. Arthur told me Prestwick was questioning him to declare an emergency which it wasn't, they then tried to charge him handsomely for landing there – he used his diplomacy and charismatic charm to avoid these two penalties.

After a welcome drink, supper and much banter we headed off to our beds with the excitement of a fun filled Saturday ahead of us. However, we woke to drizzle and low cloud which wasn't forecast.

Thankfully the weather turned bright over the Sound of Mull within an hour, the trip was on (hurrah!), some of the faster planes scooted off to our first destination, Glendoe farm strip. However, the micro-climates of the Scottish Hebrides had other ideas.

Pathfinders do a reconnaissance.

As Charles and I flew along the Great Glen in his yellow RV6 we could see a bank of cloud sitting across the mountains to the West and East of Fort William, and over the town itself. We couldn't get through as the cloud was touching the base. At this exact same time Ed (in his Super Cub) was 5,000ft above us and reported cloud rising beyond 8,000ft – there was no way through. We had to return to base camp.

We contacted the airfields beyond Fort William and they all reported CAVOK – we had to find a way through keep the trip on track.

So I jumped into the little yellow RV6 with Charles (who has now been awarded the call-sign 'Pathfinder' due to heroic low level flying along the Great Glen), to fly towards the Isle of Skye and Plockton to see if we can reach Easter, Culboke and Knockbain Farm from the South West. But no, this route was blocked by low cloud and rain too!

We returned to base camp for a second time with the disappointing news. This meant a walk around the town of Dornoch and lunch at Newhall Mains was regrettably cancelled. The airfield manager (Hughie) at Dornoch airfield had organised a few places for snacks and coffee in the town… we'll make it next time. I must admit I was so looking forward to sampling the Newhall Mains menu – it looked delicious.









The weather was moving extremely slowly across the Great Glen, so we decided to stay at Glenforsa, have lunch and take a view later in the day.

A decision was made that we should stay in the Mull area as the weather was known and we were still getting reports that the Great Glen was still blocked by cloud. Some groups headed off for a play around Iona, Jura, Ulva, Gometra, Skye and the Sound of Arisaig. A little later in the day other pilots went to Oban to fuel up in preparation for Sunday's flying.

Angus and Fiona, along with Peter and Anne, in two planes managed to sneak through the gap at Fort William and get to Newhall Mains for a cup of tea and a game of croquet, I believe the game of croquet was held in glorious sunshine.



You couldn't make it up!

We all met for supper at Glenforsa to swap stories of our day's adventures around this beautiful area. Some enjoyed a beach landing or two – I'm thrilled for those who managed to spread their wings and explore the Scottish Hebrides others visited the Isle of Skye. Well done!

We woke to a very overcast Sunday and the prospect of not being able to head South and home.

We waited the morning out hoping the cloud would shift – unfortunately the cloud stayed low. We were briefed by Brendan about the Graignish low level corridor which local pilots use during the winter to head towards the mainland. This may be our only route home.

The plan was to head toward Carlisle for fuel whilst visiting a few airstrips on the way. However, at the last minute as we were requesting PPR from Carlisle, we were told the fuel had run out as the delivery hadn't arrived… you couldn't make it up!

So, the only alternative fuel stop was Kirkbride and they close for fuel at 2pm – which we could not make in time. What a relief… we managed to persuade Kirkbride to stay open until 3pm which they did – we are extremely grateful to them.

We set off one by one heading towards the Graignish corridor with the aim to all meet at Kirkbride.

Charles and I were one of the last to leave Glenforsa. We heard on the radio the Graignish corridor was closing in with reports of pilots scudding through the corridor. We decided to head towards Oban and climb above the cloud – which we did. We cruised along at 7,000ft – peaking out between the clouds we spotted vibrant blue water and land beneath us. We descended over the Firth of Clyde and headed toward Girvan on the mainland. It was then a bumpy low level ride to Kirkbride.

We met others at Kirkbride and heard about their adventurous journey – by all accounts exciting! We then counted the planes in, one by one. As the last few planes approached I had a text from Matt asking, 'Can you get permission from the field for me to land on the grass?' Which I did – for those who are asking why? Well it's a backcountry thing, which you'll get when you own a taildragger!

A huge thank you to the airfield owners and hoteliers who welcomed us to their airfields, to the pilots and passenger who displayed a best of British, 'Let's make the most of our weekend' attitude!





Fancy going it alone?
Insights I'd like to share for when you go it alone to the Outer Hebrides…

Every flying trip I've made to Scotland I've had some sort of weather issue which says to me, always build in an extra few days to wait it out, never be in a rush to head to the next destination or even home.

Plan, discuss and review. Even though the information on Sky Demon is excellent, call the airfield owners and get a direct briefing from them – especially the remote strips as they could suffer from wind sheer, undulating ground or some other obstacle. In the case of Glendoe and Kilkerran they provide excellent written briefing documents mentioning things like undulating ground, fencing and gradients. If you are travelling with a co-pilot or in a group then even better, share the research, discuss and make a collective plan.

Take a tent and some extra food just in case you need to sleep it out at a farm strip or if there's no hotel accommodation near by.

Extra clothes are also important if the stay is extended or you need to go on a long wet walk to the petrol station or village. We were lucky, Glenforsa has a courtesy car for us to pick up the Mogas.

Fill up with gas whenever you can at whatever the cost so you know it's there for when you need it. Also, it's worth investing in a couple of gas bladders, so you can pick up some Mogas at the local petrol station or carry extra gas on board.

As we did on this trip, we constantly checked the weather using local contacts and insights. Remember this advice… the Griagnish low level corridor and local weather knowledge from Glenforsa?

As a pilot in command you need to gather as much information as you can about the situation you find ourselves in. Constantly review the status and make a decision on what next and what I'm comfortable about doing. Never feel pushed by others to fly, remember there's no shame in not flying, it's just a good decision by you.

If you can, fly with other pilots who have aligned skills and planes with similar capabilities – this is so you can enjoy all destinations and fly as a group.

Ed Smiley-Jones, AKA @HinterlandPilot
FarmStripFlying

Opposite page top left: Steve and Chris in their beautiful Jodel over Loch na Keal having departed Glenforsa for a local flight on the Saturday evening;
Opposite page top right Arran provides a dramatic backdrop for Mike and Heidi in the Kitfox over the Firth of Clyde.
Opposite lower left: Andy and Matt, leaving Glenforsa, turning North towards Tobermory.
Above Left: Looking North over Dumfries and Galloway in the Supercub.
Above right: Arthur and Geoff returning south on the Sunday afternoon.
Lower left: A farewell photograph at Kirkbride on the way home.



When the Temperatures Drop, What's Your Engine Really Up To? by Ed Smiley-Jones

We discuss, cold starts, pre-heating and winter flying.



I thought it would be a good idea to talk about winter flying, especially cold starting and pre-heating as we are coming into that time of year.

I reached out to Tyler Harbach, who is Sr. Field Service Technical Representative, Lycoming Engines for his thoughts and assistance. He sent me a long and thorough email, along with some top-tips and directed me to an article on their website www.lycoming.com/content/operating-cold-weather

However, to save you going on-line and having a lengthy read, I have summarised the content to encapsulate the key points.

The insight and information below is from North America where they get extreme weather conditions and very low temperatures. However, I do believe there is a lot we can take form this best practice, also the relevance to our members who are based in the Northern regions of the UK where it gets much colder.

Only today, on this crisp November morning, I could feel the engine was much slower to start as the temperature was definitely lower. I found the information below has helped me to understand what's happening inside the engine, also, what I should be aware of and what I should do. I do hope you find this helps you too?

I would stress that the basis of this article is from Lycoming's content but please speak with your maintenance shop to get their advice too, and also you know your engine better than anyone else!

The Basics: A Healthy Engine

A cold engine is unforgiving. If anything is slightly off, winter will show it up.

So, before you even think about starting in poor conditions, the engine needs to be in excellent health. That means:

- Spark plugs and magneto points correctly gapped and ready to work
- The ignition system functioning properly
- Induction, priming, exhaust, and carburettor heat systems are all in good order

All of these systems play a part in making sure the engine will start, and then continue to run smoothly.

One item deserves special attention during the winter months; the cabin heating system. As part of regular maintenance, it should be checked for leaks. This isn't just a comfort issue; it's about safety. Carbon monoxide is colourless and odourless, you won't smell it and a small leak can be dangerous, especially in winter when everything is closed up tight!

Preheating: Warming the Engine Before You Ask It to Work

In cold weather, preheating the engine isn't a luxury; it's protection.

Lycoming's service instructions give guidance on when preheat should be used. The exact method and how long to apply it are usually left to the judgement of the pilot or engineer, but the temperature thresholds are clear:

- For most Lycoming engines, preheat is recommended at 10°F (-12C) or lower
- For 76-series engines (including the O-320-H and O/LO-360-E), preheat should be used when temperatures are below 20°F (-6.6C).

Even if you are using multi-viscosity oil, these preheat guidelines still apply. If any of you are using straight 80 oil this will be even thicker in cold weather. Please remember, without proper preheating:

- The engine will be harder to start
- Thick, cold oil won't flow well
- Internal engine parts can suffer extra wear

Over time, this can reduce performance and shorten the engine's TBO (time between overhauls)

TOP TIP

To see what the oil looks like when cold, set a small cup of oil out overnight by the airplane and see how slowly it pours before you go flying… as this is what's happening inside the engine.

Tyler Harbach, Lycoming Engines

It's important to preheat the entire engine and oil system, not just one area.

Also, Lycoming does **not** recommend the use of heated dipsticks, although most other recognised preheat methods are acceptable.

Tyler Habach recommend the use of something like a Tanis pre-heater that sticks onto the sump… "They even make ones that heat up the cylinders as well". And as the BBC would say, 'There are other brands available too!'.

This will thin out the oil and allow good lubrication and also easier starts (note: cold fuel does not evaporate well at all). He would not recommend keeping them plugged in at all times though, since differential internal temperatures can cause condensation to form on the upper internal parts of the engine and lead to rust formation. Pre-heat should be something you use for a bit before going flying, you don't need the oil hot, just warm enough to flow easily and allow for an easy engine start.

Water in Fuel: A Small Droplet, A Big Problem

Water is one of the most common contaminants in aviation fuel. The engine cannot run on water, and while a tiny bit of moisture in the fuel can sometimes go unnoticed in warmer weather, in freezing conditions it becomes much more serious.

Even a small amount of water can freeze in a fuel line and completely block fuel flow.

To minimise the risk:

1. **Prevent water getting in where possible**
   - Keep fuel tanks full to reduce condensation
   - Make sure fuel caps seal properly, especially if the aircraft is parked outside in rain or snow
2. **Check for contamination before every flight**
   - Water check fuel tanks and sumps thoroughly and regularly as part of your preflight



If a flight is planned in bad weather, add another item to your preflight: look at the relief opening in the engine breather tube. If moisture freezes at the end of the breather and creates a plug, it can cause a loss of engine oil. That's something you want to avoid.

Simple But Important: Check Movement Before Starting

When you're on board and ready to go, don't head straight for the starter.

Check that the fuel selector valve moves freely. In very cold weather, it can freeze in position. This has happened in real life, and it's much better to find out on the ground than to discover it in flight when you need to change tanks.

Cold Starts: Why They're Not Like Summer

Most of us think of starting an engine as straightforward: turn the key and wait for the familiar sound of it catching and settling into a smooth idle.

In cold weather, it's not always that simple.

With a piston (reciprocating) aircraft engine, getting a successful start on the first try can be very important. If you keep cranking without success, the spark plugs can ice over, making an immediate start impossible.

To give yourself the best chance, you need to work with the conditions — not against them and here are a few pointers.

Batteries and the Cold: A Quiet Weak Point

Cold weather reduces battery performance. At the same time, the engine is harder to turn because the oil is thicker, if you're using a single-viscosity oil, this effect is even stronger.

Don't forget, the colder it gets:

- The more energy is needed to turn the engine over
- The less power the battery can deliver

On top of that, a battery that is discharged can actually freeze in low temperatures. A fully charged battery will usually survive the cold, but a flat one may be ruined and need replacing.

To avoid this:

- If you run the battery down during starting attempts, don't leave it get it charged right away
- Always make sure the master switch is OFF when the aircraft is parked between flights

Leaving the master on can drain the battery. Once it's flat and the temperature drops, it can freeze and that's an expensive lesson to learn.

TOP TIP

Regards to operation in cold weather, anything you can do to get heat into the engine will help with startups and will help oil start flowing faster.

I have seen various contraptions rigged by ingenious pilots, everything from propane-powered heat blowers, to stick-on sump heating pads, to "Hangar Bot", and everything in between.

Something that might help regardless of if you have a heated hangar or not is the usage of a multi-weight oil such as Aeroshell 15W50 or Phillips 20W50. These oils have a lower viscosity when cold than traditional fixed-weight oils and will help oil flow where it's needed quickly.

Tyler Harbach, Lycoming Engines

Oil in Winter: Too Thick to Help
All engine oils become thicker as the temperature drops. Thick, cold oil doesn't move easily through the engine and makes it harder for the starter to turn the crankshaft. This is one reason why summer-weight oil isn't suitable in winter.

This situation highlights the value of multi-viscosity oils and preheating:

- Multi-viscosity oils are thinner (lower viscosity) when cold
- They allow the engine to turn over more easily
- They flow faster to internal parts once the engine starts

Because oil viscosity is so important to starting and normal running, the recommended oil grade versus temperature range in Lycoming Service Instruction No. 1014 should be followed. https://www.lycoming.com/service-instruction-no-1014n

The Heart of the Start: Fuel and Air
The most important factor in starting an engine is getting a fuel/air mixture that will ignite easily.

1. In warm weather:
    - The air is less dense
    - Fuel vaporises more readily
    - The engine often starts quickly with little priming
2. In cold weather:
    - The air is denser, so it needs more fuel
    - Fuel doesn't vaporise as well
    - Starting becomes more sensitive to priming technique

Put simply: as the temperature drops, it becomes more important to have a clear, thought-out plan for priming.

Priming Carbureted Engines: A Bit of Trial and Error
For a carbureted engine, your priming plan should take into account:

- The outside air temperature
- How many cylinders have primer lines
- How many strokes of the primer are needed

Not all aircraft are built the same way. Some have primer lines going to several cylinders, some to only one. An engine that only primes one cylinder can be extremely hard to start in cold weather.

Because the total fuel from the primer is divided among the primed cylinders, you will generally need:

- More primer strokes as the air gets colder and denser

Each aircraft will be slightly different. You might find, for example, that:

- One stroke works well in the 60°F range
- Two strokes in the 50s
- Three in the 40s

As a starting point this is a simple, practical experimentation that helps you learn what works for your particular aircraft.

Top Tip
Before winter, it's also wise to ask maintenance to check that the primer lines are not clogged
If they are blocked, no amount of careful planning will give you a good start.

Fuel-Injected Engines: Timing Instead of Strokes
Starting a fuel-injected engine is a little different as the fuel air mixture is controlled by the timing rather than the primer strokes.

Here, the amount of fuel for starting is controlled by:

- With the electric fuel pump ON move the mixture control to full rich position to allow fuel to flow to the cylinders

In cold weather, the mixture may need to be held rich slightly longer than it would in warmer temperatures to get enough fuel into the system for an easy start.

Don't Forget the Throttle: Controlling the Air
We have the most control over the fuel / air mixture when starting the engine. However, keep in mind the amount of throttle opening, as it does have an effect on the air that is pumped through the engine.

Just as you add more fuel to cope with cold, dense air, it can also help to reduce the throttle opening in very cold weather.

For instance, if in warm conditions you usually set the throttle at about half an inch for start, you might find that a quarter inch works better in cold weather. Again, each aircraft is a little different, so some experimentation is needed.

Be Kind to the Starter
When the engine doesn't start easily, it's tempting to keep grinding away on the starter, hoping that "just a bit more" will do it. This is hard on the starter, and can lead to overheating and failure.

A good rule of thumb, if the engine hasn't started after three 10 second attempts (with a pause in-between each attempt) allow the starter to cool for about five minutes before trying again as it could over-heat.

After the Engine Fires: What to Watch For
Once the engine starts and is running, there are more cold-weather checks to think about.

1. Watch the oil pressure:
    - On most single-engine aircraft, the oil pressure rises almost immediately
    - On twin-engine aircraft, it may respond more slowly
    - On some twins, oil pressure may rise, then drop briefly during warm-up, and rise again to normal

These behaviours can all be normal, but the key is to know what is normal for your own aircraft and engine combination.

2. Pay attention to idle speed:
    - Do not idle below 1000 RPM after start
    - In fact, it's generally not good practice to idle below 1000 RPM at any time
    - This is especially true in cold weather, to help prevent lead fouling of spark plugs

There are exception to this so please check your aircraft manual.

In Flight: Small Clues, Big Warnings
Here's a useful tip, especially for newer pilots.

When you set up for cruise:

- Be precise with power settings, read your instruments and remember what you read
- If you choose 22 inches of manifold pressure, set it exactly there
- and if your selected RPM is 2350, set it on the mark
- Choose an altitude, trim the aircraft to hold it, and note the airspeed

Once everything is stable, these settings become your baseline. If anything changes—airspeed drops, manifold pressure dips, or the aircraft starts to lose altitude—something has changed in the engine's power output.

This drop in power might be due to a number of things:

- such as picking up a bit of carburetor ice
- or induction-air icing

Even if you don't spot the power loss immediately on the instruments, you may feel it:

- For example the control stick may feel "heavier" as you hold altitude

Top Tip

That "heavy" feel is often your early warning that the engine isn't making the power it was before.

Props, Twins, and Fuel: Extra Cold-Weather Habits

During flight in very low temperatures, it's a good idea to:

- Exercise constant-speed propellers about every 30 minutes. This helps prevent oil in the propeller dome from congealing.

If you are flying a twin and one engine shows a need to feather the propeller, don't delay:

- At reduced power, oil can congeal and may prevent feathering if you wait too long

On the fuel side, there's a simple but important habit:

- Don't run a tank nearly dry before changing tanks
- Change tanks while you still have plenty of fuel in the first one

That extra fuel is "money in the bank" if your selector valve happens to be stiff or partially frozen.

Carburettor Heat: When to Use It

Carburettor icing isn't only a winter issue, but cold, moist air certainly doesn't help.

1. As part of the run-up:
   - Always check carburettor heat
2. In general:
   - Carb heat should not be used for takeoff, however there is one exception:
   - In very cold conditions, if applying carb heat causes an increase in RPM, the engine may actually perform better with heat applied during takeoff and climb. This is rare, and most pilots will never see it, but it can occur in extreme cold.

In cruise or during descent:

- Use carb heat in the full-hot or full-cold position
- Use an intermediate position only if the aircraft is equipped with a carburettor air temperature (CAT) gauge

Oil Temperature: Not Too High, Not Too Low

We tend to worry a lot about high oil temperature, and rightly so. But low oil temperature can also be harmful over time.

For Lycoming engines, the desired oil temperature range is:

- 165°F to 220°F

To help maintain this in cold weather:

- Install a winterisation kit if one is provided for your aircraft when outside air temperature is below about 40–45°F
- If there is no winterisation kit and no thermostatic bypass valve, it may be necessary (if permitted) to partially block airflow to the oil cooler

The goal is to keep the oil warm enough and above the minimum temperature for good engine longevity

- Moisture that enters the oil during normal combustion can be vaporised and removed

If oil temperature stays too low and this doesn't happen, moisture builds up in the oil. In those cases, oil should be changed more often than the usual 50-hour interval to remove the contaminated oil and protect the engine.



Descents and Shock Cooling

Finally, we come to descents.

In cold weather, power-off descents can cause rapid cooling of the cylinder heads, this known as shock cooling which is hard on the engine.

To reduce this risk:

- Aim to keep cylinder head temperature changes below about 50°F per minute

This means:

- Plan descents in advance
- Reduce power gradually, rather than chopping it suddenly
- Maintain some power throughout the descent
- Keep the mixture leaned appropriately

If your aircraft has an exhaust gas temperature (EGT) gauge:

- For a normally aspirated engine, keep EGT close to peak during descent to maintain heat
- For turbocharged engines, lean to peak during descent unless the Pilot's Operating Handbook or turbine temperature limits require something different

In Summary

Flying in snow, frost, and low temperatures adds extra demands on both the airframe and the engine. Here, we've focused on the engine: how to start it, what to check before flight, how to treat it in the air, and how to manage temperatures and power in cold conditions.

By understanding how cold weather affects fuel, oil, batteries, airflow and by adjusting procedures accordingly you can:

- Improve starting reliability
- Reduce wear and tear
- Increase safety
- Help your engine live a longer, healthier life

Cold weather doesn't have to stop you flying. It just asks that you fly and treat the engine with a little more care.

Top Tip

Take a look at Lycoming Operators manual - here is the link to download the document www.lycoming.com/content/operator's-manual-O-360-HO-360-IO-360-AIO-360-HIO-360-TIO-360-60297-12

Thanks to Tyler Harbach of Lycoming for his help with this article.

Edmund Smiley-Jones.

Please take a look at my content on Instagram @HinterlandPilot

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For Sale

Aviat Husky A-1B Pup (160hp)

Price: £110000
Location: Edzell, UK (or elsewhere by arrangement)
Contact Jeremy on 07786 545556
Or email : j86918031@gmail.com

Description: G-OGGY is a fabulously simple aircraft. Fixed pitch, no flaps. Takes off and lands in 150m. Great payload: full fuel, 2 adults at 95kg and 25kg baggage is close to MTOW. Uses 20-25lph, so 7-8hrs endurance.

- Registration: G-OGGY
- Year of Manufacture: 2004
- Airframe Hours: 1023
- Engine Hours (SMOH): 1023
- Propeller Hours: 1023
- Engine Type: Lycoming O-320-D2A (160hp)
- Prop Type: Sensenich 74DM6S8-0-58
- Avionics:Garmin G5
- Becker AR6201 VHF radio
- Bendix King Transponder (Mode C)

Aircraft Highlights

- True STOL capability – handles grass strips and backcountry airstrips with ease
- Robust taildragger design – ideal for off-airport landings
- Excellent visibility from tandem seating
- Hangared & meticulously maintained
- Privately owned
- Recent maintenance – Annual/ARC (May 2025); Mag inspection (May 2025); New exhaust (April 2025); Cylinder overhaul (April 2024); New tyres (March 2021)

Specifications

- Max Takeoff Weight: 2000 lbs (907kg)
- Empty Weight: 1236 lbs (560kg)
- Fuel Capacity: 50 US gal (189 litres)
- Cruise Speed: ~90 knots
- Range: ~700 NM
- Climb Rate: 800 ft/min
- Useful Load: 764 lbs (347kg)

Avionics & Equipment

- Garmin G5
- Becker AR6201 VHF radio (8.33 kHz)
- Bendix King Transponder (Mode C)
- VFR panel, night lighting
- Dual controls

Additional Information

- Full logs available
- Next Annual/ARC due: May 2026
- All ADs complied with
- Extras: door locks, tow bar, rear storage bag











For Sale

David Clark Headsets

H10-40 Headsets £180.00 the pair
Please contact Charlie Papworth for more information
Tel: 07860 578146 or email: charliepapworth@gmail.com



For Sale

Aerox Oxygen Aviator Breathing Kit

As new, never used £295
To discuss this further please contact
Charlie Papworth on 07860 578146
or email charliepapworth@gmail.com



For Sale

Auto Rewind 14m Avgas Hose Reel

Auto reel 14M Avgas hose reel complete with gauge, auto stop nozzle and filter assembly. In good working order.
Asking Price £500
Contact Paul Burtwistle on 07836 693943
or email Paul@burtwistle.com



Wanted

Avgas fuel bowser

Description: Looking for either a towed or fixed base AVGAS bowser,
Hughie Urquhart; Contact number: 07586 304869
Email address: hughurquhart@gmail.com

For Sale

2500 Litre Stainless Steel Tank

Used for 25 years to hold Avgas.
Mounted on an old Ferguson trailer chassis, but easy to separate, if it is easier to transport.
Not bunded.
£1500 ono
Contact Richard on 07968 862518



FLYING FARMERS ASSOCIATION

FFA Clothing

Item	Logo	Sizes	Price
Jackets - last few		M, L.	£40.00
Jackets - New Stock		L, XL, 2XL, 3XL.	£65
Summer Jackets		S, M, L, XL.	£65
Lined Fleece Jackets		S,M	£30.00
Body Warmer (old stock)		M, L	£28.00
Body Warmer (new similar style)		XL, 2XL, 3XL.	£50
Sweat Shirts (discontinued)		S	£14.00
Sweat Shirt	Old style	S	Half price £7.00
Baseball Caps			£8.00
Ties			£15.00
Clocks			£30.00
Pens			£2.50 (postage)





Summer Jacket with fold away hood

The above clothing is available from stock. If your size isn't listed, it can be ordered. **Please note:** Clothes on the list in the sizes available will be at the price stated, but any ordered specially will be at a higher cost. Reduced prices are on old stock with old logo. Prices do not include postage. For all orders contact Roz Stephens **07773 052001** or **chix@farmline.com**
The price of FFA New Style jackets has risen considerably and once the current stock has run out the new price for one off orders (if not ordered in quantity) will be £85.00 plus postage and packing.

Profile: Roger Sheridan, Nr Horsham, West Sussex

By Rebecca Rayner



I first met Roger Sheridan when he was looking for accommodation near RAF Wyton adjacent to our farm as he was a relief pilot working for the MAGPAS Air Ambulance Helicopter crew. He would fly his Europa into our farm strip, stay over in one of our accommodation pods and cycle his fold up bicycle to work. We would often invite Roger into our kitchen for a Belgian beer and learn of his fascinating aviation stories.

Roger, tell us about your early days…
I think I had a fairly traditional urban middle class upbringing, born in the London suburbs near Croydon. Not mollycoddled, aged 8, I was expected to get the train to and from school. Dad worked for the family business, Strand Electric, making theatre lighting in the West End, his Dad was the MD although I think he yearned to be a farmer kept a beautiful garden. Fortunately the mould was broken when Strand Electric was taken over by Rank and we moved out of town to West Sussex.

My fascination with building model aircraft began around then, balsa wood and tissue paper, balsa cement and dope. Static airfix models did not appeal and nor did Action Man, he just sat there and my imagination could not get over that. Scalextric and Hornby train set were great but I really wanted toys that flew and over the years that's never really changed.

Vivid early memories of model aircraft, first rubber powered then diesel and glow motors, free flight, control line and finally radio control.

Plenty of crashes, (colloquially known as a carrier bag job), lessons learned and gradually more successful flights.

I was expected to follow my father's footsteps as an Engineer and thought everything was set up with a place at Imperial College and sponsorship from ICI to study Chemical Engineering. However, the wheels soon fell off as I couldn't generate any enthusiasm for the subject! A friend was in the university air squadron and chatting to him prompted my change of career plan.

Tell us about your family…
Well, I've got one of each, brother, sister, wife, son, daughter, dog and cat. Fortunately Lucy, my wife, likes to fly and I try not to scare her. She provides an excellent lookout and in-flight catering service which I am always grateful for.

When did you start flying and getting your PPL…
Flying training began in 1986 on the Bulldog with the University of London Air Squadron at RAF Abingdon. I managed about 20 hours and went solo on the Summer camp at St Mawgan before heading off to Cranwell.

Vivid memories of RAF basic flying training at Church Fenton (now Leeds East) the Jet Provost Mk3 which we joked had variable noise and constant thrust.

First solo on runway 08 at Elvington, then back to drink a yard of ale in the bar. Things were not politically correct back then.

Our course was decimated,13 of 19 students were failed or "chopped" which was pretty heart breaking. Although I aspired to fly fast jets, I was sent to rotary wing on the Gazelle helicopter at RAF Shawbury.

Your career…
Well, from beginning to end I got paid to fly in a variety of roles for which I feel very very fortunate. Being paid to do what you love, that's great.

After training it was the Wessex helicopter supporting Army operations in Northern Ireland, then RAF Manston on the Sea King Search and Rescue and Chipmunk with 7 AEF flying air cadets. Notably the chippy had a cartridge start system which was great fun.

I came out of the RAF in 1994 and spent 2 years working for Ivan Shaw at Europa Aircraft, running their US sales office in Florida. We would demonstrate the Europa, import and supply kits, provide telephone tech support to the builders whilst also building our second demonstrator in a T hangar beside the office. It was hard graft but the perks were good, one Friday evening Ivan and I closed the office at 5 and flew down to Key West for the weekend

1997 I trained on the A320 and started operating holiday flights for Airworld from Gatwick to European beach and ski destinations. The airline morphed and merged several times, Flying Colours, Caledonian, JMC, Thomas Cook and Mytravel. Crews felt that money was wasted in repeated rebranding and were not surprised when it finally went bust!

Fortunately, before then I had returned to helicopter flying on the MD902 Explorer with its unique NOTAR (no tail rotor) system. That was the ideal platform for Air Ambulance work, landing at unprepared sites where a tail rotor is very vulnerable to FOD damage. The flights were short but quite exciting and it was a privilege to work alongside our emergency service workers.

Each job has been quite different but all very satisfying and enjoyable. Whatever the role and wherever you are on the learning curve, there's always room to improve.

How did you hear about the Flying Farmers Association?
Not certain but probably via google and then after moving to a farm with airstrip it seemed an obvious resource.

Do you have any other interests other than flying?...
I love to tinker with and fix things, so the kitplane job with Europa was a great experience and LAA aircraft ownership suits me as I'm allowed to maintain and hopefully improve the machine. Anything to do with science and technology will get my attention and I've just started using a 3D printer.

I enjoy water sports and many outdoor activities.