

## January 2026 Newsletter

Welcome to The Gloster Strut Newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading it. Please send any contributions, letters and comments to [editor@glosterstrut.co.uk](mailto:editor@glosterstrut.co.uk) directly.

**Happy New Year to all our members,**

**Aviation enthusiasts and fellow pilots**

### Photo of the Month

Pietenpol Air Camper



### Chairmans Chat

Welcome to a brand new year everyone, may 2026 bring you the best of health, some beautiful flying conditions and trips to plan!! As we have mentioned before, 2026 is the 80th anniversary of the formation of the PFA / LAA and it is something we want to celebrate in style. The forward thinking at this stage is to have a Gloster Strut fly in, hopefully at Croft Farm when we could invite aircraft from each decade from our flying history and up to the present day. Thinking back, plans built aircraft of the early years were Luton Minors, Taylor Monoplanes, Freds and VP1's, they made a name for themselves, with a few still flying today. Of course, as the years went by many more plans and kits became available, replica warbirds, then on up to the very popular Vans 3,4,6, 8's and on up to the very efficient touring machines we see coming off the blocks today.

We have in mind a Summer fly in date, so the planning will start as we turn into the new year, early planning is important of course, but it will be a very enjoyable date for all concerned, you will have advanced information issued to get the dates into your diary, bring the family, kids and friends!!

The January 13th Strut event at The Victory Club will bring us a very interesting presentation on the finding, retrieval and restoration of a U S Airforce Cessna Bird Dog. Located in Hawaii and shipped back to the UK. The owners Shona and Laurie ( both big jet pilots ) undertook and completed a very high level of restoration, shown on TV with

one of the Warbird Restoration programmes, it is an impressive result with an attention to detail, what an impressive aircraft. Hope to see you there.

The AGM on the January 13th meeting too, it won't take very long to rattle through that one of course! Christmas cake and wine, as if we haven't had enough over the Christmas bash, so bring some small change for the pot.

A couple of changes to the committee on the cards.

2026, let's make it a good one!

Best to you All

Mike

## Strut Committee

As mentioned by Mike, the next meeting is also the AGM where, as the rules have it, all committee posts require election/re-election. Mike has hinted there will be a couple of changes and so, if you would like to become more involved in the running of the club, we would welcome new blood. This can be done by putting yourself forward or proposing someone (with their prior agreement) to stand for election to any of the posts.

For your information, although it is available on the [website](#), here is the current committee...

Position	Member
Chairman	Mike Waldron
Membership Secretary	Harry Hopkins
Treasurer	Bruce Morris
Website/Newsletter	Mick Peakman
Sommelier	David Joyce
Committee	Tim Houlihan, Tim Badham

## The last meeting

Local historian, Richard Chatham, gave us a few words on the history of the village of Stoke Orchard, followed by a more detailed account of the history of its airfield. I'll restrict this precis to the latter.

It seems that a large field in the village, albeit a field with a spring-fed reservoir in its middle, was selected by the Air Ministry before the start of WWII as a relief landing ground, to which end the reservoir was filled in. Although initially used in the RLG capacity it later became the home of No10 Flying Training School and the School's Tiger Moths. However, as the need for Army glider pilots became apparent, the FTS vacated

and it was used to train Glider Corps pilots in the Hotspur glider, a machine which was crewed by 2 plots bit could carry 8 additional soldiers as passengers.

Over the period of its use as an airfield, 4 large Bellman hangars and several blister hangars were erected on site. The Bellman hangars, reskinned, remain in place today.

Glider Corps pilots destined for the larger machines – The Horsa, Hamilcar and Waco – used the Hotspur as a stepping stone in their training.

As many of you will know, postwar the Coal Board had a research station to the north of Stoke Orchard airfield. You may also be aware that the Gloster Aircraft Company, whose main factory and airfield were at Brockworth, built many of the RAF's Hurricane and Typhoon fighters. What I didn't know was that some were assembled in a large building on what became the Coal Research Establishment, from whence they were towed to Stoke Orchard airfield to be flown out.

Oh, and to add to the problems of whoever was its commanding officer, Stoke Orchard was also home to a WAAF outfit!

As this was our pre-Christmas meeting, we celebrated with a glass of wine and a mince pie each.

To those of you who couldn't be with us, we send Christmas Greetings and the Good News that our January meeting will be a treble as it's the AGM, the Strut birthday celebrations (cake and wine) to accompany yet another interesting speaker.

## The Wit & Wisdom of Aviation

### Qantas Engineering Reports

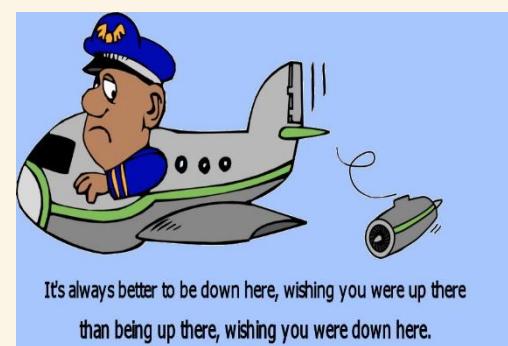
Alleged reports filed by Qantas Airline Pilots and the Engineering Responses.

This is the final one unless you, dear reader have another source of quotes, in which case, your Editor would be more than happy to accept them.

**Pilot:** Mouse in cockpit

**Engineer:** Cat installed

### Quote of the Month



**The three most useless things in aviation during an emergency are: The altitude above you, The runway behind you, and the fuel left in the fuel truck**

## Phil Mathews

As we went to press we were sorry to hear that Phil Mathews, Chief Flying Instructor of Cotswold Aero Club will be spending New Year's Eve in hospital suffering a minor heart attack on Sunday 29th January. He is in good spirits and hopes to be out around the 5th January. We send him best wishes for a full and speedy recovery.

## Flight Safety – Ditching

### Part 3 of the Flight Safety article by David Joyce

As someone who has flown my Europa over the Channel more than 100 times as well as over longer stretches of the Atlantic, North Sea, Irish Sea and Mediterranean, I have done my best to find hard data on the topic of ditching and to attempt to minimize my own risks. Until recently the only good source I have found for reliable information on ditching hazards has been the excellent article 'Ditching Myths Torpedoed' by Paul Bertorelli, available on line [here](#) (**Ed:** *This article is over 25 years old so read with that in mind*). He reviewed 8 yrs of official US (NTSB) data involving 179 ditchings around the US. Of these 12% resulted in fatalities and 88% survived the whole experience. The proportion for those surviving the landing and subsequently dying was just 4.3%, strikingly different from the postulated 50%. When Gasco published an article on Ditching in 2010 restating the '50% Die before rescue' dictum, I was moved to write asking whether the author had any evidence at all for this assertion. The answer was in effect, "We are experts and this is what we believe!" with no evidence presented. This unsatisfactory correspondence led me to ask the CAA for details of small UK register aircraft ditchings, and to my surprise and delight, they came up with full summaries of all the UK Reportable Accidents of aircraft under 2730kg involving ditching between 1990 and 2011. I have made a detailed analysis of these data which was published by Gasco in summer 2012, (to their credit). What I propose to do is share the broad results of this study and Bertorelli's US study with you and give you my thoughts on how I feel this bears on the question of flying a Europa over a substantial body of water. Although I could be said to be temporarily the world's expert on the risk of ditching a UK registered aircraft (simply because it seems that no-one else has bothered to look at the data!!), I hasten to add that I am no expert on the intricacies of ditching – I haven't ditched one and do not intend to if I can avoid it! On the other hand I have spent a long time studying all the UK ditchings in detail, and have a long 'wet' history of falling out of high performance dinghies and wind surfers and also reasonable experience in Open Water Scuba Diving, so I hope you will find my conclusions helpful.

My study looked at all 49 UK aircraft that ditched in the 22 years (1990 – 2011). Six of these were UK aircraft ditching in various other parts of the world (mostly hostile) and the

remaining 43 were in UK waters. There were 80 occupants in all, of whom 8 died, that is 10.0%, marginally better than in the Bertorelli series. Only 3 people died of the 75 who exited their plane alive. This is 4.0% – again much the same as the US figure and dramatically better than the mythical 50%. The ditchings involved 35 planes, 4 microlights and 10 helicopters, and the differences in mortality rate by type were not statistically significant, but for what it is worth were: planes 11%, microlights 25% and helicopters 4.8%. Mortality rate between October and March at 13.3% was somewhat higher than in the warmer months (8.0%), but again this was not statistically significant.

Detailed analysis of the deaths showed that nearly all were potentially avoidable by following sensible basic flying principles. Thus 3 of the 8 were not wearing lifejackets when this would almost certainly have saved them. Another was not found for 13 hours in spite of a Mayday and rapidly scrambled helicopter because the pilot lacked a working PLB or a GPS or other means of giving an accurate position fix. Three others died almost certainly because they lost control in flight and effectively crashed, producing incapacitating injuries. You might wonder whether this was because they were possibly trying to retrieve lifejackets or other safety equipment from the back, rather than concentrating on flying the plane. That just leaves a 78 year old pilot who ditched his PA 28 near a boat in the Channel Islands, pushed his wife out, followed by the dinghy, but then tragically sank with the plane before managing to get himself out. It is entirely reasonable to conclude from this that the risk of death from ditching is of the order of one or two per cent if one wears a life jacket, has a working modern PLB, and manages to fly the plane all the way down to a controlled water landing. In terms of the overall risks of flying, ditching deaths only account for about one percent of deaths from all causes, before one begins to discount those that wouldn't have happened had they been wearing lifejackets, etc.

### **So, how does all this relate to the Europa?**

Buoyancy: Three of the UK deaths occurred when PA 28 aircraft sank before the occupants got out, but this was not a problem noted with any other type of plane. One survivor in a PA 28 actually timed himself sitting on the wing for 2 minutes before it sank, and another was timed as sinking just 3 mins after touch down. The Europa Classic has nearly a cubic metre of foam in its flying surfaces and this would give it buoyancy close to 1000kg, well above its Max AUW, so on the face of it a Classic would float indefinitely with the passengers in or on it. The XS has probably only a tenth of this amount of foam and even adding the buoyancy of a near empty fuel tank and a tyre or three, it is possible that it would fill up



with water and sink eventually. One Europa XS has ditched off the coast of Chile and floated long enough for the pilot to be rescued and the plane to be towed ashore, where it was hauled out to find that there had been no discernible structural damage.. The air in the wings above the level of the aileron control openings is effectively trapped there, as long as there are no extra openings – and this suggests that anyone putting in Nav lights would do well to ensure that ‘air tightness’ is maintained at the wing tips.



**The Landing:** There is lots of good practical advice on how to do a ditching in the CAA SafetySense leaflet. The key point is that you want to land on as flat a bit of water as possible at as slow a speed as possible. Water is effectively solid if you hit it at speed. The microlight pilot who crashed in the Channel in 2011 at the start of a planned trip to Australia had injuries which were said to have been typical of a 300g crash! Going straight into the

face of a steep wave is not good news! So choose to land directly into wind only if the water is pretty much flat, otherwise you should land along the crest of the swell, crabbing as you would in a strong cross wind. Seasoned sailors may be able to detect wind direction from the surface appearance and as this may well be different from swell travel direction, this could determine optimum approach direction along swell. The wave form of the swell is visible from quite a height, whereas winds of moderate or strong force will make visible lines across the water, looking a bit like the lines produced by coarse sand paper. However it is certainly not worth worrying about that unless you have the background which makes the answer obvious!

For the Europa I don’t think there is any doubt that you should use full flap. Many pilots of fixed undercarriage aircraft worry that the plane will invert on impact and that they will then have difficulty opening the canopy. For what it is worth there was only one instance recorded in Bertorelli’s US data and one in the UK data, where the plane was said to invert. The ‘mode of arrival’ is not always recorded but where it is, it seems to be much more common for the plane to splash a bit and then simply nose in, often with the windscreen breaking at the time of impact, but for the plane then to settle in a normal or slightly nose down attitude before eventually sinking. In any case it is fair to say that there were no UK deaths in 22 years attributable to the plane inverting.

There is some debate about whether to undo the door lock before impact, to guard against the possibility of the door jamming. It is absolutely clear to me that it would be wrong to open a Europa door in flight. There is a good chance it would blow off, possibly causing violent aerodynamic forces and perhaps causing significant damage to the tail plane or fin and certainly causing the pilot major distraction. The design of the locks

makes it difficult to imagine a way in which they might jam, but it would be perhaps worth contemplating opening just the passenger door lever to the 45 degree position, as long as prior experiment has shown that this position still keeps the doors reliably closed. The deceleration when the plane does nose in is abrupt enough that it is certainly better to have seat belts securely fixed. Europa seatbelts are not of a design that seems prone to jamming, but having one of those tools to hand which combine a belt cutter and a window hammer (or a knife) seems good practice.

The choice of where to land for me is fairly simple: If close to a ‘friendly’ section of land (i.e. not one with rocky cliffs) then aim to land close off shore. If away from land and there is a small or medium sized boat, aim to land ahead and to one side. If alone in the ocean, circle and land as close as possible to the last position given in your Mayday, unless you have significant height, in which case glide towards the likely direction of help.

Life jackets: It is critically important that you wear your life jacket when travelling over water – three of the eight UK deaths in the last 22 years were directly related to not wearing one. It is not good enough to have one somewhere and put it on if things go pear shaped. There will be so much else to think about that they might easily be forgotten, and the act of getting them out from behind the luggage may be just enough to cause loss of control. Much is made of the need for a crutch strap on a lifejacket, but I remain unconvinced. I have fallen out of and regained my dinghy or windsurfer upwards of 500 times in a jacket without such a strap and feel that as long as the jacket is adjusted to fit snugly it will do. It is important that the jacket has a self-inflating system activated by pulling a toggle, as well as a blow up tube. An automatic system that inflates on contact with water (as fitted to some nautical life jackets) is not suitable for planes – you absolutely do not want your life jacket to inflate before you have got out of the cockpit. In the unlikely event that the plane has sunk before the occupant gets out, the air in his lungs will have halved in volume by the time he is 10 metres under, and with it all his natural buoyancy has gone. Being able to activate the life jacket will get him rapidly to the surface, whereas simply swimming up (assuming he can work out which way is up) may take too long. I have found that getting into a dinghy is made easier if you deliberately push yourself down under the surface first so that you ‘bounce’ out of the water and then help this upward movement with pulling on the dinghy with your arms, (a bit like penguins getting on to ice floes!)

Dinghy and/or Survival Suit: It has been said that survival suits double the survival time in cold water, although I would expect rather more benefit than that. US Coast Guard figures



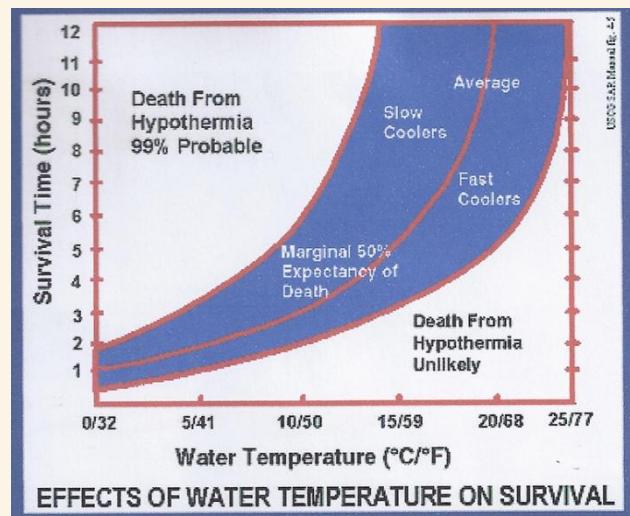
suggest survival of at least 30 minutes, 1hr. and 2hrs in 5C, 10C and 15C water respectively, with no protective clothing.

Visual Search Patterns			
Radius of search area (NM)	Search Area (NM <sup>2</sup> )	Searching time required	
		Person in water Sweep width 0.1 NM	Liferaft Sweep width 1.0 NM
1	3.1	1 hr 3 min	06 min
2	12.6	4 hr 11 min	25 min
3	28.3	9 hr 26 min	56 min
4	50.3	16 hr 46 min	1 hr 41 min
5	78.5	26 hr 11 min	2 hr 37 min
10	314.2	104 hr 44 min	10 hr 28 min

A dinghy has clear advantages over a survival suit as long as it is possible to get it launched and get into it. Survival in a dinghy should be measured in days

rather than hours, and it is significantly more visible from a searching helicopter than someone in the water in any sort of suit. The choice will be determined by circumstances and personal preference. I wouldn't dream of crossing say from Norway to the Shetlands without a dinghy, but would happily cross the Channel with just life jackets. I would be reluctant to fly over water at 5C or less without a survival suit, but even in the depths of winter Channel temperatures do not fall this low. (I have recorded minimum Channel temperatures throughout one winter as: December = 10; Jan = 9; Feb = 8, March = 8, April = 9 and May = 10 degrees C.) So I have personally invested in a dinghy (which is well within the luggage carrying capacity of my Europa) and have avoided getting any sort of survival suit. This is the solution I would recommend to Europa and most small plane owners, but it would be different for those whose flying consisted of travelling in helicopters (which probably sink virtually instantaneously) over the North Sea.

It is not necessarily a question of either a suit or a dinghy. In extreme circumstances both would be appropriate, and the single UK ditching that happened in the Antarctic allowed both occupants in survival suits to survive in a dinghy for 10 hrs before being rescued. There is a difference in buoyancy aids and lifejackets, inasmuch as the former give perhaps 15 to 20 lbs of buoyancy whereas the latter offer appreciably more and also have it concentrated on the front of the chest and round the neck. A lifejacket is designed to keep an unconscious person afloat in a 'face clear of the water' position, but can be a considerable hindrance in trying to get into a rubber dinghy. Dinghy sailors and canoeists always opt for buoyancy aids, as they allow easy flotation (of a conscious person) without getting in the way. A flotation suit like the Fladen is a buoyancy aid as well as a survival



suit and has the buoyancy spread widely and thus has the advantage of not getting in the way when climbing into a dinghy. There is something to be said in my experience for not inflating your lifejacket before you (if the first to do so) get into the dinghy. Others can bob around in the water, safe with their lifejackets inflated, waiting for the first one in the dinghy to help them in.

For anyone contemplating buying or hiring a dinghy, it is advisable to ensure that it comes with a ladder to assist boarding and also a water trapping structure below the bottom, which helps to stop it blowing off rapidly downwind or flipping over in a strong wind when empty, (this is now a standard feature in modern dinghies).

Dealing with the cold: The 1-10-1 Rule. If going into cold water (say less than 10 C.), there is the likelihood of cold shock complicating matters. This consists of an involuntary gasp reflex, followed by hyperventilation and rapid heart beat. These features settle after a minute or so, but it is of course critical that the initial gasp reflex doesn't occur whilst the face is under water and from this point of view it would be a mistake to go into seriously cold water without your life jacket inflated, or to dive in head first, or if that is unavoidable then hold your nose and cover your mouth. It is also of consequence to know that the feeling of suffocation that accompanies the hyperventilation will settle reasonably quickly and to try to breathe as normally as can be. There is then a period of 10 mins or so when reasonable movement and dexterity are maintained. It is important to do anything that will help survival within this period (such as activating a PLB or getting everyone into a dinghy or tying everyone together in a group in the water). Survival for an hour is likely, but in a state in which you are unable to help yourself. It helps to huddle together with others if in the water, and to keep as much of yourself as possible out of the water – in water cooling is significantly more than out of water even with high winds.

Communications: Keeping in radio communication when over water seems critical. Finding a body in the sea when there is only a vague idea where it might be can take days. On a short Channel crossing this presents no problem at any height, but with longer sea crossings there just might be a point where one is out of contact with a shore station. This could be a question of height, although from 3,000ft one has straight line contact with a 500ft radio mast 88nm away. More probable is that you are out of effective range for your radio. All sizeable ships and commercial aircraft keep a listening watch on 121.5, so if you do not have contact with a standard ground station, go straight to 121.5. Don't waste too much time reminding yourself what exactly goes into the ideal Mayday. Mayday x3, G-HELP, Engine Failure, Ditching at position XXXX are the critical components. I have made a routine of turning my Garmin GPS back one page when practicing PFLs so as to reveal the Lat & Long data, and including this position in a mock Mayday. If I were ditching I would keep repeating that position all the way down to the water, or better still, get my passenger to do it. Without a working GPS or some other accurate position fixing kit I would be appreciably more reluctant to go out of gliding range of the shore. The other

form of communication in this context is of course a PLB. This is now a CAA requirement if going more than 10mins at normal cruise speed from land, but it is also just as obviously common sense as a life jacket. Modern PLBs with GPS and satellite links allow your precise position to be found within minutes. They are also now significantly cheaper than they were, with several models selling at around £200.

**Reliabilty:** None of the 49 UK ditched aircraft appear to have been powered by a Rotax 912/4 engine, which certainly suggests they are more reliable than other alternatives. Having said that, there was one Europa near miss with the pilot skillfully gliding into the Isle of Wight on a Cherbourg crossing, although in this instance the engine had already had serious problems flying up through France and one has to admire his skill more than his judgement in undertaking the long crossing in such circumstances! Finally it is perhaps worth emphasizing that the commonest reason for fixed wing planes ditching seems to be fuel starvation!



**Conclusions:** I am pretty confident that my conscientiously maintained (and fuelled) Europa is most unlikely to give up over the sea. I am also highly confident that if it did, my passenger and I would live to tell the tale. I would expect the plane to end up upright, for us to have no significant injuries and for there to be time for both to get out on to a wing, blow up our lifejackets and access the dinghy, and quite possibly access other safety gear, such as a portable radio in a waterproof container. I strongly recommend that anyone flying over water has mentally thoroughly rehearsed what they would do on the way down if things went quiet! This rehearsal should also highlight the things you then wish you had already done, like briefing your passenger, wearing your PLB attached to you and positioning the dinghy in a place (just behind the pilots seat back, for me) where a sudden impact will not lead it to knock your head off, but where it is easily accessible from the wing. Above all remember that whatever else is happening it is crucial to keep flying the plane – more than a third died because of losing control before touch down. For what it is worth this is what I would do:

1. Check engine status and try spare tank, second fuel pump & restart procedures, whilst trimming for best glide speed (70 kts for me) and considering turning towards nearest coast.
2. Mayday with position to shore station or 121.5 & get passenger to continue Mayday exchanges, with up-dates of position & situation. You could also squawk 7700, allowing radar fixes if in range, but probably no added benefit if you have given a good position fix.

3. Have a good look around and decide whether the shore, a ship or an oil platform are in range and decide where to land.
4. Look at the wave pattern to determine direction of swell and consider strength of wind. If swell looks substantial, choose to land along a crest. If time get passenger to remove shoes and spectacles, and retrieve any key items (like that emergency radio and possibly the belt cutter/hammer to put in a pocket).
5. Flaps +/- gear down in good time to trim & get used to normal approach glide speed.
6. Passenger to adopt crash position before impact, but pilot better keeping head up to ensure continuous control, flaring and holding off just above surface as long as possible – better to avoid a crash than be in a position to reduce its impact!
7. No point in bothering with switches off. The sea will sort any fire risk! Possibly half open passenger door handle, but avoid opening it completely.
8. Once stopped get canopies open and both out onto the wing ASAP. The wing is likely to be very slippery, sloping and mobile, so one has to be prepared to cling tightly on to the fuselage edge. At this point passenger should inflate life jacket, (never while still in the plane).
9. If plane doesn't look like sinking imminently and the water temperature isn't very low I would hold off inflating mine and instead get the dinghy out, and inflate it taking care to hold on to its painter (which also for mine is what inflates it following a firm jerk). If the plane is still showing no signs of sinking, I would be tempted to run the painter through a loop of seat belt and back to me, but definitely not tying it to the plane. Then climb into the dinghy off the wing. Getting the passenger from his wing into the dinghy behind your wing represents something of a challenge! I think the best way of doing this would be for him to clamber over the cowling while holding on to the front door frames. Then he might get in as well without even getting wet! This is possibly a tad optimistic and one or both of you may well be in the situation of having to climb into the dinghy from the water. In that case you will be particularly pleased that you didn't let go of the painter, that you got the sort of dinghy with a ladder system and that it has one of those underwater structures to slow it down in its movements and in my personal view if you are a strong swimmer and the first to get in the dinghy, you will also be pleased that you haven't already inflated your life jacket.
10. There is no great rush to cast off if the plane is not sinking – a floating Europa is visible from a considerable distance, and a dinghy will probably drift downwind at a different speed, and separating yourself from an empty floating plane serves only to confuse the rescuers. When you do want to cast off it is simply a question of letting go of the free end of the painter and pulling on the dinghy end which should just slide free. This is of course one of the situations where Sod's law might come into play, and I personally fly with a

penknife in my pocket, which would allow me to cut a stuck painter, or indeed to deflate a dinghy which someone has managed to inflate in the plane (and this sad mistake accounted for two deaths in the Bertorelli study).

11. Get the PLB working, and if not close by a ship, get the hood up and take any other measures that your kit allows you. Huddle to preserve warmth.

There is an excellent CAA SafetySense Leaflet on [Ditching](#).

I hope that the overall message in this comes over as entirely optimistic, which it is meant to be. The chances of surviving a ditching are very good, but for full effect optimism needs a bit of help from prior thought and preparation. As I see it, most such preparation entails firstly having suitable equipment and secondly having given a fair bit of time and thought 'Armchair Flying,' working through how you would cope with the event. I have not mentioned survival courses, but although I would not want to discourage anyone from getting any sort of training, it seems to me that few if any of the UK ditching deaths (with the probable exception of the helicopter death) in the last 22 years were attributable to factors that survival courses would have addressed, at least for those with the wit to wear a life jacket!

## Dates for your diary

Literally nothing is happening in January!

## Downloads from the CAA and others

### Insight

November UKAB INSIGHT newsletter now available

November's edition of [AIRPROX INSIGHT](#) features an Airprox between a PA28 flying an RNP procedure to Lydd Airport and a Cessna 182 that was transiting the area.

The article discusses the proliferation of RNP procedures outside controlled airspace and some considerations for all pilots, not just those flying the approaches or who operate under IFR. Notably, the annotation printed on all VFR charts that 'Pilots are strongly recommended to contact aerodrome ATSU before flying within 10nm of any aerodrome marked with instrument approach feathers' may not be of sufficient distance from the aerodrome to capture the extent of the activity.

## CAA Stuff

### **REMINDER: Halon Fire Extinguisher Decommissioning**

General Aviation pilots and aircraft owners are reminded that halon-based handheld fire extinguishers must be removed from aircraft cabins and crew compartments by 31 December 2025, in line with UK environmental regulations.

The CAA is not responsible for enforcing these rules or issuing exemptions.

Guidance on replacement options and regulatory responsibilities is available on our [website](#).

### **Electronic Conspicuity: Updates to CAP 1391 Supplementary Amendment and SRG1757 Form**

The UK Civil Aviation Authority has released Version 2 of the [CAP 1391 Supplementary Amendment](#).

It includes updates to the licensing conditions regarding 24-bit aircraft addresses and the differences in SSR Mode A codes for unmanned aircraft with a 978 MHz UAT device.

We have also updated the SRG1757 Electronic Conspicuity Declaration of Capability and Conformance form for an EC device manufacturer to declare a device that conforms to the specification set out in [CAP 1391](#).

Please email [us](#) if you have any questions.

### **Changes to UK Flight Crew Licensing**

October 2025 brought significant changes to UK Flight Crew Licensing, including updates to the UK Aircrew Regulation for the Private Pilot's Licence (Aeroplanes) training syllabus, licence skill test and guidance on the biennial refresher training, as applicable to the Single Engine Piston (SEP) and Touring Motor Glider (TMG) ratings. These changes are fully in force – there is no transition period in which compliance with pre-October requirements is permissible. Further information can be found on our [website](#).

### **Reminder: Safety Sense Leaflet: VFR Flight into Instrument Meteorological Conditions**

Visual Flight Rules (VFR) flight into Instrument Meteorological Conditions (IMC) is a significant cause of accidents in General Aviation flying.

When an unqualified pilot enters IMC, a loss of control or flight into terrain will often result. This [Safety Sense leaflet](#) gives guidance on planning to avoid a VFR into IMC

scenario and what actions to take if you are confronted with poor weather conditions when not qualified to fly in IMC.

Pilots qualified to enter IMC may also be at risk if the entry is unplanned or the pilot is not in adequate instrument flying practice.

See all our [Safety Sense leaflets](#).

### **Delay to combined licence**

As part of the Licensing and Training Simplification project we agreed to move forward with a with a licence document issued under both Part-FCL and the Air Navigation Order. This has been delayed due to regulation changes coming into force next year regarding electronic licences. This will now be incorporated as part of the ongoing MASLO project. More information can be found on our [website](#).

### **LAPL recency requirements are changing**

October 2025 brought significant changes to UK Flight Crew Licensing, including updates to the UK Aircrew Regulation in relation to the Licensing and Training Simplification project. One of those changes relate to recency requirements for LAPL(A) holders however compliance is only required by 1st October 2026.

We are now able to process these updates on pilot's records and are therefore allowing early transition for those who wish to do so. Further information can be found on the [LAPL\(A\) webpage](#).

### **Updated Standards Document 14 (A), V9**

[Standards Document 14](#) provides guidance for Pilots of Single Pilot Aeroplanes, Class, Type and Instrument Rating Skill Tests and Proficiency Checks (Excluding Single Pilot High Performance Complex Aeroplanes).

### **Thermal Runaway Risks in eVTOL Aircraft**

The CAA has commissioned WMG University of Warwick to investigate how battery characteristics can affect thermal runaway risk, and complete a review of lithium-ion battery firefighting methods.

Read [CAP3203](#): Battery Thermal Runaway in eVTOL Aircraft: Risks, Mitigations, and Firefighting Strategies

### **Airspace Safety: (Post) Holiday Reading**

The [Airspace & Safety Initiative website](#) now includes a downloadable reminder of what to do if you [infringe](#), complementing the full range of content in the infringement [tutorial](#).

The latest occurrence [report](#) looks at a Class D Farnborough CTA-1 infringement. Thanks to the pilot's openness and post flight actions it highlights that most occurrences are not down to a single cause.

There's also a new page for pilots [planning to fly in the Farnborough area](#), featuring new and updated hotspot narratives from the teams at Blackbushe, Fairoaks, Farnborough Air Traffic Service Unit and members of the Wessex Local Airspace Infringement Team.

## Gloucestershire and other airports

### Coventry Airport

As mentioned in the December edition of the Newsletter, Coventry Airport to close to make way for the future of transportation. Read the official report [here](#).

## Mini-Competition

As mentioned below January 13<sup>th</sup> is also the birthday of the Gloster Strut. The question is, how old is the Strut? Answers via email to [editor@glosterstrut.co.uk](mailto:editor@glosterstrut.co.uk) directly. There are no prizes other than the winners' name being read out on the night thereby gaining fame and fortune henceforward.

## Tail piece

On the right is a Junkers F13. The photo was taken at the Hahnweide Air Rally. It was originally produced in 1932, as 'the first all metal airliner'. Now recreated in 2016, with corrugated aluminum alloy, a Pratt & Whitney Wasp engine, and a \$2.5 million price



## The next meeting

The January Strut meeting will be held on Tuesday 13th January at the Victory Club in Cheltenham. It will also be the Struts AGM and our birthday!

The speaker will give a presentation on the finding, retrieval and restoration of a US Airforce Cessna Bird Dog.