



Be prepared: even if you're not a Scout

Get yourself and your flying machine ready before a summer of flugelling fun, says **Chloe Eriksen**



If you're flying to a grass strip, phone ahead to check conditions

THE weather is finally looking like spring, and we can now start to make plans to take to the skies once more.

The CAA has prepared an excellent video on spring preflight inspections and some of the areas to focus on when inspecting your aircraft after a winter lay-up. You can find it on the UKCAA YouTube channel with the title *Spring pre flight inspection hints and tips*.

It is vital to carry out a thorough inspection of an aircraft whenever we go flying, but this is even more important when it has been stored for any significant period of time.

In addition to these excellent tips on what to look out for as you bring your aircraft out of hibernation, the CAA also has a return to flying preflight checklist, which can be found on its safety topics/safety animations page at <https://www.caa.co.uk/general-aviation/safety-topics/safety-animations/>.

Some points to consider

- Is your map in date?
- Consider taking your first flight back with an instructor.
- Conduct a thorough check of the aircraft.
- Check your personal flying equipment.
- Take time to adequately prepare.
- Are you fit to fly?
- Check Notams and procedures, as these may have changed since your last flight.

Personal currency

The CAA highlights the importance of correct preparation for the first flight of the season and the need to consider recency as well as personal currency.

UK NPPL (M) holders are required to have

completed a minimum of 12 hours in the 24-month validity period, with at least one hour of this time (and up to four) as dual training with a microlight instructor.

But it's worth bearing in mind that this is the minimum requirement, and that we can all be susceptible to skill fade over a prolonged period of not flying. When returning to flying, consider keeping your first flight simple; perhaps a local area trip in light winds.

Landing is mandatory

Earlier in the year we examined one of the most common features of the published AAIB reports on microlight accidents and serious incidents for 2022, and that was landing issues.

Problems with landing were cited in over 50% of these reports. As we look ahead to the new flying season, this is an area on which I would like to focus and consider our options.

Knowledge of the intending landing site is key, for example if there are any peculiarities to the airfield.

Pooleys and the *AIP* will be invaluable resources, but don't be afraid to give the airfield a call if you are unfamiliar with it. Nothing beats current local area knowledge.

If this is the first flight of the season, pay special attention to the landing site conditions on that day; consider the implications of the condition of the surface in the recent weather, and if it's a grass strip, the effect of long grass.

As the saying goes, taking off is optional, but landing is mandatory, so preparation for landing before flight will pay dividends.

Of course, sometimes the approach just doesn't go our way, so it is vital to be mentally and physically prepared in order to execute a go-around if you encounter unexpected wind conditions, if your speed is too low or too high or if the picture just doesn't look quite right.

Belt up

If you do end up having difficulties on landing, a harness can go a long way to keep you safe.

The forces experienced by the body during an impact can be fatal, and a correctly fitting harness could save your life.

The BMAA has launched the "Belt up" safety campaign for the month of May, and we would encourage you all to check the condition of this lifesaving piece of equipment and ensure that you and your passengers wear them correctly.

Here's to a safe flying season! □

For your own safety, and that of your passenger, use your harness, and belt up when you fly.

BELT-UP



The BMAA is launching the 'Belt-up' safety campaign for spring 2023, in order to raise awareness of the importance of wearing harnesses in microlights.