

IN THE GREEN

The official newsletter of Thurston Helicopters

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Welcome to the first edition of Thurston Helicopter's brand new newsletter, *In the Green*. We hope it will help to keep you informed about all things helicopters at Headcorn and will be pleased to receive

any contributions to future editions that you might wish to make.

E-mailed versions will be available on request and the current edition can be viewed on our website:

www.thurstonhelis.co.uk/newsletter

GPS Course

We will be running a GPS evening course on 19 March, here at the airfield. The course, which will be 2 hours long, will be an introduction to the correct use of the Garmin 430 and Skyforce moving map.

One of the most obvious differences between the ability of a private pilot and that of a professional pilot is the correct use and knowledge of GPS.

GPS is not generally taught as part of the PPL syllabus. However, it is an immensely important part of modern navigation, which when used correctly can only add to the safety of the flight.

The tutorial will be followed by dinner at the Chequers pub, Smarden. Please phone the office to reserve a place.

Laying down the Air Law

One of the most important but often overlooked aspects of Air Law is Rule 5. Found in Section 2 *Rules of the Air Regulations of the Air Navigation Order* it covers a multitude of situations involving low flying. Here is a look at one of the most commonly committed crimes in aviation.

5 (1) stipulates that you should not fly lower than 1500'agl above the highest fixed object with in 600m of the aircraft.

The common mistake made here is that pilots fly around at 1500' as indicated on their altimeter which is invariably set on QNH. This of course gives you altitude above sea level not your height

above the ground immediately below you.

So flying over Maidstone with an indicated altitude of 1500' with the QNH for the day set on the altimeter sub scale will be illegal. Why? Because Maidstone is 450' above sea level and the aircraft will only be 1050' above the ground.

To legally transit Maidstone you need to be at least 2000' on the QNH setting. However, be careful not to go higher than 2400' (indicated on your altimeter with the QNH set) as this will put you in the London TMA which is Class A airspace. *Please always feel free to discuss any aspects of Air Law with an instructor.*

Take Torque...

Firstly I must start by wishing all our readers a very Happy and Prosperous New Year. Let's hope at least that the weather this year is at least as good as it was last summer! Secondly, I want to thank Will for having the 'oomph' to get this Newsletter up and running.

Many students say to me 'The best part about flying

is the learning, when you've got your licence you wonder what happens next...' Well, hopefully we've given you a few ideas within these pages. Those of you who haven't yet crossed the Channel really need to! You only have to ask. GPS I'm sure is something that might need further clarification; it really has revolutionised flying over the last 10 years

with the price of units dropping by factors of ten! Our course next March is to be thoroughly recommended. Finally, the London Helilanes trip is an unforgettable experience which you can capture on the most fabulous photos. Forget the London Eye at 400' – try the whole of H4 at 1500' or so.

For those of with you with licences please don't forget your LPC, it can be done with me (and soon

with Will as well) any time 3 months before its expiry with the new expiry date up to 15 months ahead of your existing one, if you see what I mean!

That's all for now. Please keep up with your flying, remember even just a few circuits keeps your hand in and flying during the week is so much quieter than at

weekend – stay safe.

James



Events Calendar

Fly-in to the Isle of

White This will take place sometime in May. We will fly down Saturday morning from Headcorn (arriving in time for lunch) then we will spend the afternoon flying around the South Coast.

We will stay overnight and depart Sunday morning and fly direct to Compton

Abbas for lunch, returning home in the afternoon.

Robinson Safety Course (Los Angeles) After the very successful visit last year to the Robinson factory in LA we will be arranging another trip for this November.

GPS Course (See front page). This will be held 19 March at the airfield, followed by dinner at The Chequers, Smarden.

Rates

Type	Dual rate per hour	5-10 hour rate
R22	£215	£199
R22 SFH	£155	£145
R44	£360	£345
R44 SFH	£295	£285

NB G-EMMI, being a Clipper II, is an additional £10 per hour

Please note that all the above prices include circuits and landing fees at Headcorn.

All prices are exclusive of VAT

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What about the weather?

Your understanding of the weather is almost as important as your ability to fly the helicopter. There is an old aviation adage that says: it's better to be on the ground wanting to be in the air than in the air wanting to be on the ground!

What are the best ways to get essential weather information?

Internet

www.avbrief.com This is essentially a subscription site although some of the basic features can be accessed for free. It costs £39 per year and is the primary service used in the office.

It gives METARs, TAFs, Metform 214 (wind forecast) and 215 (low level forecast). There is also a daily three-day forecast issued every morning. This

is written in plain text and gives an overall picture of the weather situation.

One of the most useful features this site has to offer is the rainfall radar display. Updated every 30 minutes, this is an excellent tool for determining the actual progress of the weather and assessing the accuracy of the forecast information.

Another useful feature on offer here is the Notam service. In conjunction with software downloaded from **www.notamplot.com** you can download Notams from the Avbrief site and have them displayed pictorially on a map of the UK. It is then very easy to see whether there is going to be any area subject to a Notam. If you are planning a cross-country it is a good idea to consult Notams so that

you don't fly into restricted airspace or make an impromptu appearance at an air show!

www.bbc.co.uk/weather

This is an excellent, no-nonsense site giving easy-to-understand current and forecast weather.

The five-day forecast for your local area, or the area in which you are interested, comes in the form of symbols. These can be instantly interpreted – which is more than can be said for a three line TAF.

Text Messaging

www.wxsupport.com

This site enables you to obtain METARs and TAFs via a text message – a particularly useful service for those situated in a remote area.

By registering with the website you are eligible for 10 free texts giving

you the opportunity to try the service first. After that, 100 credits can be bought for 35 euros (£22).

To receive a METAR or TAF you simply text the four letter ICAO code for the aerodrome of interest to the number given. Within seconds you will receive a Surface Actual or Forecast, depending on what you have requested. Each item costs one credit plus the cost of the text message.

The Met Office, in conjunction with the CAA, issue a highly recommended little booklet called *Get Met* which is available for free in the office. This is an essential part of any pilot's flight bag as it gives lots of useful information from phone numbers for fax back weather info to decodes for METARs and TAFs.