



## SAFE FLYING IN WINTER

**There is nothing to beat flying on a clear bright winter day, but it does bring its own challenges and requires careful planning before taking to the air. Here are some factors to consider:**

The days are shorter which limits flying hours so make sure your route gets you back on the ground at least half an hour before sunset unless you have a Night Rating. (See article page 3)



THE AIRFIELD IN WINTER: PHOTO ROBERT HARSTON

Ice on the ground and in the air poses a serious danger. It compromises flight surfaces, so it is essential to ensure that the aeroplane is thoroughly de-iced, and surfaces dried before take-off. In winter it is well worth including ice-scrapers (for wings, not windows), de-icers, and dry cloths your flight bag. Allow plenty of time to take the aeroplane into the hangar to thaw out if necessary. Don't take off with even the smallest amount of ice as this will break down the smooth air flow and hence could lead to a stall.

Starting the aeroplane can be much trickier in cold weather. Aeroplane engines need a bit of extra TLC in winter. The key factor in starting an engine is the use of the primer to achieve the right fuel/air mixture to achieve combustion and this is affected by temperature. It needs time to atomise before attempting to start.

When it is warm 30-45 seconds is enough time to wait after priming. When it's cold wait up to two minutes. Some instructors recommend three cycles of the primer then go through the pre-start checklist. Pull the primer out slowly and give it time to fill before pushing it in. If the engine doesn't start easily, stop and prime again. Wait for 2 minutes. This time after priming you are going to pump the throttle twice **WHILST TURNING THE KEY**. You must never try

to pump the throttle without turning the key as this can lead to an engine fire.

If engine start has not occurred after three ten-second attempts with a pause between each, allow a 5-minute cooling off period, otherwise the starter will overheat and could fail completely.

Ice may form on the wings if you enter cloud or are in a very moist atmosphere. Otherwise your main concern with ice is with your carburettor. Regular carb ice checks are as important as always.

If the wind doesn't allow for landing on 03 low sun can make approaches on runway 21 very tricky in the late afternoon. It is worth taking along a baseball cap or visor and delaying landing until the sun has moved round. Listen carefully to the radio calls from other pilots in the circuit because they may not be visible. Use the Lambourne VOR (115.6) to help position on final.

Happy Winter Flying! At Stapleford, as at many airfields with grass runways and taxiways, mud is a perennial problem during the wet winter months. When it is muddy then the instruction is "hard surfaces only" on 21/03, and backtracking on runway 21. Remember as you turn on to Final, back-tracking traffic has priority.

To prevent getting stuck in the mud, avoid obvious boggy areas particularly in the Warrior park.

**For further advice on winter flying go to the Safety Sense leaflet at:**

<http://publicapps.caa.co.uk/docs/33/SafetySense03-WinterFlying.pdf>

## CHRISTMAS GIFTS TAKE FLIGHT

**Ask many pilots what drew them to aviation in the first place and the response will be a trial lesson as a Christmas present. Stapleford has gift options to attract wannabe pilots of all ages.**

For starters there is the option of a 30-minute trial lesson in a Cessna 152 (£98.50) or extend the session to 1 hour (£189). While most of us private pilots can only dream of flying a super modern fast business jet and are unlikely to extend beyond flying a single engine piston plane, there is the opportunity to spend 30 minutes at the controls of a business jet in Stapleford's Alsim simulator (£69) or enjoy an hour

living the dream. For the full 60 minutes it's £120.

That irresistible bear, Stapleford Ted (£13.44) is a popular present for young pilots of the future. Don't forget Stapleford Reception has a selection of pilot necessities like logbooks, plotters and charts for sale.

For further information call Reception: 01708 688380 or go to <https://www.flyingpresents.co.uk>

## SPACE INVADERS

**Rob Gratton, Principal Airspace Regulator and Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Lead for Airspace Infringements, gave a presentation on Airspace Infringements in the UK and how to avoid them to a packed Stapleford Clubhouse of instructors, PPLs and students.**

It was acknowledged that in the Stapleford area there are a lot of potential airspace threats. Rob stressed the importance of careful planning, avoidance of complacency when flying in familiar territory and skills fade due to lack of currency.

He emphasised that there was a legal obligation for a pilot to file a Mandatory Occurrence Report (MOR) in all cases of infringements. This was essential to improve air safety. In any year there are about 1,000 MORs and 800 pilot reports.



THE AUDIENCE AT THE AIRSPACE INFRINGEMENTS SAFETY BRIEFING. PHOTO JON ONSLOE

In looking at Human Factors, pilots should ensure that they are fit to fly, legal to fly and ready to fly. Following Covid lockdowns there had been a lot of infringements because of lack of currency. Threat and Error management should form an essential part of flight planning.

Pilots could become easily become distracted by passengers or by other traffic and enter controlled airspace without clearances. The advice was to factor into flight planning possible delays in getting clearances. Incorrect altimeter setting posed another risk. The Take 2 principle was recommended: remain 2 miles and 200 ft clear of controlled airspace – and always have a plan B.

The use of moving maps like SkyDemon were recommended to help avoid infringements. For definitive NOTAM information on restricted flying areas pilots should refer the NATS website. He also recommended signing up for the Airspace Safety Initiative website, Skywise.

The importance of frequency monitoring codes was stressed. On no account should transponders be switched off to try and avoid detection of airspace infringements.

**There are regular SkyDemon training sessions at Stapleford run by Fly-outs Organiser, James Lee.**

For further information contact: [flyoutssfc@gmail.com](mailto:flyoutssfc@gmail.com) or text James on 07922 614607

## STAPLEFORD INTERNATIONAL

**Michal Zienkiewicz, who trained at Stapleford, has set up the first flying club of its type in Poland, where he is an instructor. He reflects on his ten years' experience in the UK and Poland:**



HEAD OF TRAINING MICHAL ZIENKIEWICZ PRESENTS HIS FIRST STUDENT WITH A COURSE COMPLETION CERTIFICATE. PHOTO: WESTWINGS

You never know where your future will take you and what role the flying qualifications gained at Stapleford will play in it. As the tenth anniversary of my PPL skill test with Tony Glover in G-CBYU is fast approaching, it is a good moment for me to look back and pay a tribute to the organisation where my aviation dream took off.

I was an anxious flyer to start with, so it took me more time than expected and some soul searching to become a qualified pilot. It would never have happened without my instructor Simon Norman who understood my situation and adapted his teaching to my learning pace. Also SFC, albeit a very busy commercial pilot school, extended just the right amount of flexibility to allow me to achieve my flying goals despite my initial doubts.

Ten years and 700 flying hours later I am running a start-up flying club in Poland and an associated Declared Training Organisation (DTO) with three PA28s. The plan was to transplant the idea of a pilot club or non-equity group to my native Poland, where it hasn't existed before. Even though it was a long and convoluted way for me to get there, with the main takeaway being never stop challenging yourself but don't overdo the pressure.

Stapleford played a big part in my progress. Encouraged by my instructor I started the IMC Rating course and got a cross-channel check pretty soon after getting the PPL licence. That allowed me to fly further and more often,



and consequently become a more competent pilot. Equipped with new privileges, I acquired a Piper Dakota, based it at Stapleford and started ticking off destinations like Calais, Ostend or Alderney. I completed the “big” Instrument Rating in Poland, and the Class Rating Instructor course at OnTrack at Wellesbourne, the foundations were laid here at Stapleford.

Every pilot, just like every human, has a Comfort Zone, outside which lies a Learning Zone. I encourage you to go there from time to time. Consider visiting new airfields, obtaining new privileges, and perhaps training to fly a new aircraft type, to be able to use more of the SFC’s fleet. If you like sharing your flying with others, like me, then look into the mirror – maybe you are looking at a future instructor who doesn’t know it yet? Just remember to introduce one challenge or one new variable at the time, though – unless you want to visit the third, Terror Zone!

My story is no exception, SFC’s alumni are everywhere! During my latest trip to the UK (joys of maintaining EASA and UK Part-FCL licences) I stopped by the flight deck after the inbound landing and the captain said: “you look familiar”. It turned out that both pilots trained at Stapleford!

If you’re interested to see what we’re doing, please search for Westwings Poznań online. If your flying ever brings you to Poznań (EPPO), let us know at [poz@westwings.aero](mailto:poz@westwings.aero) so that we can save you a handling company expense and put the kettle on.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**Stapleford’s reputation as a flight training school and successful flying club is well established and now the popular Clubhouse restaurant is proving a big attraction and not just to local flying folk.**

Visiting pilots are drawn to Stapleford because they know that there will always be a good selection of freshly made snacks and brunch dishes; daily specials, all cooked on site, using locally sourced foods and catering for all dietary requirements - vegan, vegetarian, Halal and gluten free. The regulars acknowledge that the restaurant is better than ever.

The Clubhouse is also the go-to place for the local community for Sunday Roasts; the homemade Lasagne is always a sell-out. Curries, wraps, smashed avocado and home-made cakes are especially popular.

Running the Clubhouse team and masterminding the menus is Danielle Mole, supported by two kitchen staff and six bar staff. Danielle has been at Stapleford for the last three years, having previously run the restaurant at North Weald Airfield, near where she lives. Danielle is very enthusiastic about Stapleford’s Clubhouse and its food but has never sampled the flying – yet.

“Everything is cooked fresh each day – we never use frozen food. We buy our eggs from the farm next door.

When I go to a restaurant I like the food to be freshly cooked, so that’s what we do here”, says Danielle, who is largely self-trained but has been gaining management qualifications.



DANIELLE MOLE IN THE CLUBHOUSE

“I particularly enjoy managing those special occasions when the Clubhouse is booked for a party or a wake for up to 100 people. I always have some balloons ready for a kids’ tea party. I want to ensure that we give it that personal touch” says Danielle.

Running a restaurant on an airfield presents its own challenges. It’s not just the pilots who are weather dependent. The weather can make a considerable impact on the number of customers for brunch or lunch, even if the coffee intake increases on those non-flying days when we sit in the Clubhouse and watch the weather – and wait for a break in the clouds.

And watch out in the coming weeks for that flavour of Christmas Danielle can’t wait to introduce into her menus, and the décor.

## THE SKY AT NIGHT

**Night Rating Instructor Shaun Eason invites Stapleford pilots to experience the London lights and get a night rating:**

Usually at this time of year we think of the shortened days and the restrictions this has on our passion for flying. But have you ever thought of flying at night by undertaking a course in night flying?

Flying at night is great fun and a world apart from daytime flying. There is a peace that comes from taking off and climbing into the night sky looking across London at the bright lights of our city. Stapleford offers a night flying rating. The courses run from November to the end of March.

The requirements for gaining a night rating are as follows:

- At least 5 hours total time flying at night
- 3 hours minimum with an instructor
- At least 1 hour of cross-country navigation with at least one dual cross-country flight of at least 50 km
- 5 solo take offs and full stop landings

There is no test at the end of the course but you must have satisfied the instructor that you are competent to fly at night.



THE NIGHT SKY FROM INSIDE OF A TECNAM. PHOTO SHAUN EASON

Undertaking a night rating certainly makes you a better and safer pilot. Getting caught out returning to the airfield in winter months with darkness falling means you are prepared and able to cope. The skills gained from the course also make you more accurate in your piloting skills. Extra special preparation and care is required to fly at night. Landing at night can only be described as exciting and challenging. When you land in the dark solo there is no better sense of achievement. Navigational skills become more accurate too. You really need to be aware of your position and route.

The rating lasts the life of the licence. However, you must keep it current. You can do this yourself. The requirements for night flying once a rating has been obtained are set out below.

The night rating needs to be completed within six months, which means a pilot can't start training in November and complete next November. The rating lasts the life of the licence. However, you must keep it current. You can do this yourself.

A pilot may only fly as pilot in command of such an aeroplane carrying passengers if: within the preceding **90 days** the holder has made at least **three take-offs** and three landings as the sole manipulator of the controls of an aeroplane of the same type or class; and if such a flight is to be carried out at night and the licence does not include an instrument rating (aeroplane), **at least one of those take-offs and landings has been at night.**

**Night rating courses at Stapleford run from November to the end of March. The 5-hour course costs £1,095 in a C152 or a Tecnam; £1,235 in a PA28 or C172. Should extra hours be required the hourly rate is £219 in a C152 or Tecnam; £247 in a PA28 or C172. For further information and to make a booking contact Stapleford Reception: 01708 688380**

## SUCCESS STORIES

**Congratulations to all students who have flown their first solo and to those pilots who have recently achieved their PPL – onwards and upwards. Wishing them all the best for their future flying.**

### FIRST SOLO:

Genevieve Desmond, Guarav Gill, Rilwan Jaffeer, Dinesh Kamalanathan, Asbjorn Riseth, Caelan Rodrigues, William Sternberg.

### SKILL TEST:

Danyal Aziz, Ajzane Bacchus, Samuel Blake, Tim Brown, Vasikeren Chandrasekaran, Lewis Cronin, Adrian Hooker, Raul Hossain, Ahmad Khan, Balint Kulscar, Lewis Dale, Tapiwa Ngwena, Dhruv Patel, Holly Thompson, Guarav Vaseer.



GENEVIEVE DESMOND, FIRST SOLO



STUDENTS ON THE CURRENT ATPL COURSE WHICH STARTED IN SEPTEMBER. THIS IS FIRST COURSE UTILISING THE TRAINING MATERIALS FROM BRISTOL GROUND SCHOOL WHO HAVE REPLACED PADPILOT AS STAPLEFORD'S PARTNER OF CHOICE. THE NEXT ATPL COURSE BEGINS ON JANUARY 3. PHOTO: RICHARD PIETZ

TAKE OFF is edited by Sue Rose ([suerose.pr@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:suerose.pr@hotmail.co.uk)) and designed by John Pasche. Please do send us your stories, your photos and your ideas.

**Stapleford Flight Centre, Stapleford Aerodrome, Stapleford Tawney, Essex RM4 1SJ  
Tel 01708 688380 Fax 01708 688421 [www.flysfcc.com](http://www.flysfcc.com)**