



Welcome to the JERSEY AERO CLUB

July 2026 members newsletter

Editor - Eveline Hawkin

FOR YOUR DIARY ...

Wednesday 15th July - Talk by Jersey AME - James Mair (details to follow)



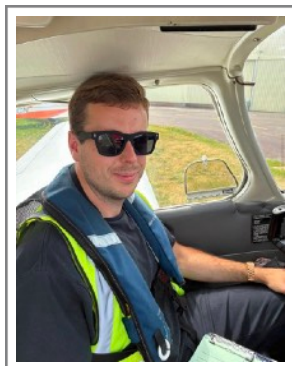
Skywalker Jersey July 2026 update ... by *Lee McConnell*

Flying Programme

It's been a very strong month of June, with G-JJER logging an extremely busy programme as the summer season gets into full swing. G-EHLX recently went into maintenance in the UK to undertake some works and her 100-hour check at Fast Aviation, and we're pleased to report she's now back in action. That means we have both PA28 aircraft are fully available for the summer programme — a real boost to availability, so do book early as the diary is filling fast through the holidays.



Huge congratulations to Hugo and Matthew, who both completed their first solo this month — a fantastic achievement and a real milestone in any pilot's journey. Well done to both!



Hugo



Matthew

We're also delighted to introduce our new pricing scheme. In particular, we'd love to highlight our block-hour deals for self-hire — a great way to get more value in the air. These are ideal for students who've recently completed their PPL and want to stay current and keep flying, so please speak to the desk to find out more.

Handling / FBO

We've seen a constant flow of traffic and visitors into Jersey this month, keeping the flying desk very busy as the summer season builds. A particular highlight was a delightful visit from our friend Shona Bowman, who stopped in for a cup of tea and biscuits while routing from the UK to France in her Cessna Bird Dog. It's a wonderfully characterful aircraft — often nicknamed the "Jeep with Wings" — adapted from the civilian Cessna 170 and well known for its slow-flying capability, which made it ideal in its day for scouting enemy troops and directing artillery and bombers. A real treat to have on the apron, and we've included a few photos of the visit below.



We're also pleased to share that we've taken on two new members of staff, Janet Smith and Fay Barber who many of you will already know well. Both have had a long and close relationship with the Jersey Aero Club over the decades, so it's wonderful to welcome them back. Please do give them a warm welcome when you see them on the desk and learning the ropes — we're sure many of you will be glad to see such familiar faces.

Other Activities / Business

Progress continues on the AI Sim AL250 simulator. Our technical engineers have been in at the Aero Club to set up the parts, install the new projectors and fit fabricated brackets to get the sim up and running. We did encounter a few challenges with the visuals and screens, which need to be raised up to get things just right. To solve this, we're adding a step in the forward section of the sim so we can lift the screens and deliver a properly immersive experience for everyone who uses it. We'll keep you updated on progress — and we can't wait to get you all airborne in it very soon.

Committee updates ... *from Andrew Renouf*

Self-Serve Facility

The self-serve facility has been held up due to waiting for the Barclaycard Terminal, however, the application was finally approved on 29th June. Checkout Limited have already pre-programmed the payment terminal with our drinks and other items. We will hopefully have a rapid rollout as soon as the card reader arrives.



Balcony glass

We obtained several quotes to remove the temporary black plastic security barrier that was erected after a CAA visit. Unfortunately, in spite of chasing for months, contractors were either not interested in such a small job or quoted eye watering amounts to complete this last section. In the end we did this work ourselves by ordering the marine stainless tube/bends from the UK and completed the work at 1/3 of the quoted price.



Other maintenance/projects

The building continues to absorb a reasonable proportion of the Club's income. Just this month we have had to replace 2 x door closers, replace a door lock and an electronic fire door "hold back" device, patch the pot holes in the car park, repair the lift, replace Fatima's Glass Dishwasher, repair the pump and the supply hose on the main Coffee Machine & provide a new electrical supply to the SIM room.

Flight Simulator

To obtain the best possible installation the Aero Club are building a curved laminate plinth so the screen can be raised to touch the ceiling. This will also allow the SIM to slide under & move closer to the screen which will give better side coverage and a more immersive experience.

This work should be complete within a few days after which the UK team will return to set up the projectors



Work in progress gluing the layers of plywood



Update ... by Richard Hawkin

Fuel for Alderney ?

Press Release - States of Alderney Seeks Proposals for Fuel Provision at Alderney Airport

The States of Alderney has launched a Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking organisations interested in providing aviation fuel services at Alderney Airport.

The process seeks proposals for the provision of both Jet A1 fuel and Avgas, supporting the needs of scheduled commercial air services, emergency and rotary operations, and the wider general aviation community.



The requirement forms part of ongoing efforts to improve operational flexibility at Alderney Airport and enhance services for aircraft operators using the island. Currently, there is no fuel provision available at the airport, requiring aircraft to make alternative arrangements.

Re-establishing fuel services would support scheduled air services operating under the Public Service Obligation (PSO), improve resilience, and provide a valuable facility for visiting and locally based aircraft.

The States is seeking turnkey solutions covering the full fuel supply chain, from fuel delivery and storage through to aircraft refuelling, customer management and payment systems. The tender has been deliberately structured to allow flexibility and innovation from potential providers and does not prescribe a specific methodology or technical solution. Proposals may include a range of approaches, including fixed or portable storage and dispensing systems.



Update ... *by Eveline Hawkin*

Joint event with Wetwheels

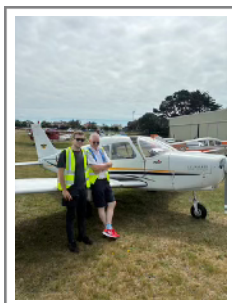
Sunday 5th July will be our 4th joint event with Wetwheels. It has become a great favourite with everyone having the chance to fly and sail.

This year, we will be hosting 40 guests starting the day with breakfast at the club.

Our guests will then be split into groups with some flying whilst the others are sailing. After lunch, those who have flown will sail and vice-versa.

Fun day and of course as usual, we are keeping our fingers crossed for the weather.

Once again, the Helping Wings Team wishes to thank all the volunteers without whom these special days would not happen.



First solo ...

The Helping Wings Team would also like to congratulate Hugo Butlin on his first solo.

Hugo is a very much appreciated supporter of Helping Wings and we look forward to the day when he too can fly our guests!

If you are interested in either flying for Helping Wings and helping on the ground, contact us on hello@helpingwingsjersey.org

Your story - Home of Homes ... *A pilot's journey from Speke (Liverpool) to the Jersey Aero Club* ... by Lee McConnell. **Part one of two**

My earliest aviation memories are not my own. They belong to my grandparents, Babs and Ernie, who used to take me to Jersey every summer as a child. We flew from Speke Airport in Liverpool, often on the British Midland Viscounts that were then the mainstay of the route. My grandfather had first arrived in Jersey by boat as a soldier, as part of the British army's liberation of the island in 1945. In the years that followed, he and my grandmother returned every summer by air, and from a very young age I went with them. The island that he had once arrived at under occupation became the holiday destination of my childhood.

Most of the children at my Liverpool primary school had never been on an aeroplane. I knew, even then, that I was lucky. And I think the seed was planted in those early flights.



Arriving all smiles in Jersey with my grandmother, Babs, then departing in tears.

Looking up

I grew up in Liverpool, and from a very young age I was the child who stood in the street looking up at the sky. Whenever a plane went over I'd wonder where it was going, who was on it.. Flying was, even then, my idea of freedom. The sky was the part of the world that always looked open and to me was a door to escapism to another world.

Flying represented freedom and independence to me, and it has been that way since I was a child. I

The 81 bus to Speke

By the age of seven or eight I had become — there is no other word for it — obsessed. My uncle John gave me an airband radio, which I listened to after school and at weekends. My mother, who quietly preferred me at the airport, as opposed to me being on the streets, would make me egg-and-cress sandwiches and put me on the 81 bus to Speke. I would sit at the airport all day. In the 1970s you might only see one or two arrivals — often the daily Heathrow flight, a British Midland Fokker F27 — but I didn't mind. I was where I wanted to be, I knew my own future was destined to be in aviation.

I read every aviation book I could find. I don't entirely know where the determination came from. I would tell anyone who asked that I was going to be a pilot — and most of them, kindly enough, tried to talk me out of it, I think they didn't want me to be disappointed as it seemed an impossible dream to achieve, because to them it seemed an impossible dream to achieve at the time.

In the early 1980s the jets arrived on the route — the BAC 1-11s and the DC-9s — and I was beside myself. A whole new era opened up. The air shows came too. I remember Concorde visiting. Each one of those moments stoked the same fire.

On our annual trips to Jersey I would spend whole days on the balcony of the old 1937 terminal building with my airband radio, writing down registrations and taking photographs. My father had a friend who cleaned the Jersey European Twin Otters, and one summer he managed to get me into the cockpit of one. That was the moment I knew I wanted to do with my life. Not 'I think I'd like to'. I knew it !.



Concorde obsessed, an over enthusiastic me at Speke on the railings in awe, 1979.
Photo of me with my air fix models.

BMA Fokker F27 taken by me at Speke in the 70s on the spotter's balcony, also Concorde at Speke early 80s.

The trial lesson

When I was about thirteen, my Auntie Phyllis paid for me to have a trial flying lesson at Keen Air in Liverpool. Mr Keen took me up in a Cessna 152, and afterwards he turned to my mother and said: 'This will either put him off flying, or he'll be even obsessed.' I was even obsessed!

I joined the Air Training Corps soon after. I have to admit I never took to the marching and the discipline, but I loved everything else — the navigation, the orienteering, the structure of it. It gave me a framework for the determination I already had.



Me (age 10) in the cockpit of the G-OJEA Twin Otter 1980.

Jersey at seventeen

At seventeen I left Liverpool and I knew what I wanted to do, I wanted to forge my own destiny. My father's siblings lived in Jersey, so I had somewhere to stay, and the island was already my second home. Jersey Airport in those days was the third busiest in the United Kingdom. There were aircraft everywhere. I wanted to be in the middle of it in any way I could.

I saw an advertisement in the Jersey Evening Post for a baggage boy with British Midland. I applied immediately and was called for an interview with the station manager, Brian Le Lievre. I had the Air Training Corps discipline in my head, and I knew I had to look the part. I turned up in a suit.

Brian opened the door, looked me up and down, and invited me in. He sat across from me in silence for a moment. Then he said: 'Lee, you're the first lad who's ever turned up for a baggage boy interview in a suit. On that basis, I'm giving you the job.' He didn't ask me a single question about my experience or my passion for aviation. I'd dressed for the part and he had decided. I was over the moon.

Three jobs

The baggage boy job in those days was hands-on. There were no baggage belts that went round corners — we stood next to the check-in agent, lifted each bag off the scales, placed it on the straight belt, and another lad at the far end carried it round into the loading bay. I loved every minute of it. The atmosphere at Jersey Airport in those years was electric.



Snapshot from the mayhem of
the 1980s British Midland

I needed money for my aviation career. I had no means of transport at the time, until I saved up enough for a bicycle. I took a second job at a bank in St Helier, and a third as the spotlight boy at one of the famous venues at West Park. I cycled from my aunt's house in St Mary in all weather conditions.

I remember walking into the Jersey Aero Club for the first time. I was nervous and felt completely out of place. Eveline Hawkin was the first person I met at the flying desk, and the warmth of her welcome settled me. Then I met Peter Elliott, who was a flying instructor at the club — and, crucially for me, also from Liverpool. The fact that someone from my hometown had walked this exact path before me made the whole thing feel possible. I started my first lesson with Alan Spalding, and from the very first moment I knew I was in the right place, I felt I belonged.

First solo

My first solo, with Peter Elliott, came on a day my mother was visiting Jersey. The three of us had been doing touch-and-goes with her in the back. Without warning me, Peter taxied to a holding point and asked her to get out. She didn't know why. He simply said he'd meet her back at the club shortly, and sent me off.

Peter then caught a lift back to the Aero Club in the airport fire truck — which, as he later told me, was the only ride going his way. My mother, on the Aero Club terrace, looked down and saw him arriving in a fire truck without me, and the colour drained from her face. He rushed up to the terrace to reassure her — and, as he arrived, I was rolling for take-off on my first solo.

She told me afterwards that all she remembered was watching the twinkling lights of the aircraft moving across the Jersey sky, with Peter's arm around her shoulder, and trying not to faint and she told me that she knew at that moment a dream had come true.

It went well, of course. I carried on and completed my Private Pilot's Licence shortly afterwards. I was awarded the trophy for youngest pilot of the year. I made friends at the Aero Club that I still have today.



1988 Jersey Aero Club at 18 years of age.

The Aero Club

The Aero Club was, in those years, the centre of everything for me. It was a hive of activity — four PA-28s on the line, and a Chipmunk. Trips with friends post-licence to Brüggen, to France, around the Channel Islands. One trip in particular with Tony Cleworth to RAF Brüggen in Germany remains one of the most memorable I've ever done.

And in the evenings, after work, everyone from the airport ended up there. The air traffic controllers, the check-in staff, the cleaner, the pilots, the ramp staff — all in the same place, all talking about the same day from different sides of the operation. People had pride in their work, and they wanted each other to succeed. I have never been able to recreate the feeling of those evenings anywhere else; it was a wonderful period of time in my life.



RAF Brüggen flying in, G-REXS, G-BOPC & G-ATZA

Inside the operation

Within a year of joining British Midland I had moved into load control, and then into the operations department. It was like a dream. I had access to the flight deck, I was producing load sheets and despatching aircraft at one of the busiest regional airports in the country. I remember Saturdays with over four hundred movements: Viscounts, BAC 1-11s, DC-9s, F27s, all on the apron at once. The manual load sheet was a serious piece of work, and I had Alan De Gruchy to teach me. He was a master at it. I owe him a great deal.

From British Midland I moved to Servisair, the ground handler, and then to British Airways as a check-in and flight despatch officer. British Airways taught me about standards — what they were, how to apply them, why they mattered. The calibre of the people I worked alongside was something I have carried with me ever since.

Concorde

During my time at British Airways I was seconded to Heathrow for winter periods. On one of those days, as a Red Cap on the apron, I despatched a Concorde. The passengers that day included Lord King — then the chairman of British Airways — and the musician Prince.

I have never forgotten that moment, standing on the Heathrow apron in a red cap with the responsibility of sending Concorde on its way. It introduced me to a world of high-profile aviation that, much later, would shape everything I did.

One regular passenger on the BA Club desk in those days was Alan Whicker, who lived in Jersey. He was a complete gentleman every single time — quiet, courteous, never less than charming with the check-in staff. I never told him, but as a young boy, I had watched Whicker's World on television, and a great deal of my wanderlust had come from those programmes. The man whose journeys around the world had first made me wonder what was outside my hometown, was now standing at my desk asking for an aisle seat.



Prestwick

Over a four-year period, I had been working and studying towards my professional pilot's licence, learning the subject's in-between shifts, whilst juggling three jobs at this time, in order to self-fund my aviation courses. I just kept focused and determined. Colleagues and friends at the Aero Club and the airport could see what I was doing and were all supportive of my endeavours, this more than anything kept me upright.

When the time came for my final commercial training at British Aerospace at Prestwick, Scotland, which at the time was one of the most highly regarded top professional pilot schools, many of the pilots on the course were sponsored — by Gulf Air, by British Airways, by Emirates — or had families paying their way.

I was there as a solely self-funded pilot, and one or two found it astounding. I didn't see it as a setback. The effort and the sacrifice were mine alone, and the success was earned through my own dedication — and that has always meant a great deal to me. Whatever came afterwards, I had earned the right to call it my own. I came back to Jersey with the licence in my pocket and went straight back to my load-controller job. When I climbed into the cockpits to deliver the load sheets, I would hand the captain a copy of my CV at the same time.

Into the cockpit

My first flying job was with Aurigny on the Shorts 360. The interview took place at the Aero Club bar, where the chief pilot had asked six or seven of us to assemble. We had to prove ourselves over a drink before we were even invited to the aircraft. Those of us he selected then had to fly a full Operator Proficiency Check on the Shorts — take-off, engine failure, hold, NDB approach, go-around, full manual flying, no autopilot, no flight director — in a type none of us had flown before. I passed, and I flew with Aurigny for about a year.

Then a job came up at Air UK, based in Jersey, on the Fokker F27. Flying jobs in Jersey in those days were what we used to call dead-man's shoes. You didn't get them by waiting; you got them by being remembered. Captain Mike Le Galle, who had been the chief instructor at the Aero Club years before and who was by then the Air UK base captain, was aware of my aspirations. He told me later he used to see me cycling to the airport in all weathers — rain, snow, dark winter mornings — and he had quietly taken note. The bicycle in the rain and my work ethic, without my knowing it, had been quietly noted.

By the time I started, the F27 had been replaced by the ATR-72, which I flew for the next few years. The Air UK team was old-school in the best sense. I flew with captains who had come up on Dakotas and DC-6s — pilots from a different era of aviation — and what they taught me, in a few thousand hours of right-seat time, was beyond price.

Jets

When KLM bought Air UK, the Jersey base closed. I was offered an F50 job in Humberside, but I couldn't bring myself to leave Jersey. I applied to easyJet and was hired onto the 737. People warned me against the low-cost carriers — they said they'd be the first to fail in a downturn — but I could see what was being built, and I trusted my instinct. I flew the 737-300 classic and then moved onto the NG as one of the first pilots through the differences course. Then I was moved to Gatwick, where I was dual-rated and the rosters worked me into the ground.

A friend gave me the direct number for the chief pilot at Ryanair. I called Dublin and got through to a lady with a strong Irish accent who, in a manner all her own, asked whether I really wanted a job with Ryanair, whether I had a medical, and whether I was prepared to fly the older 200-series. I started to wonder whether I'd dialled the right number at all. I got the interview. I refused to pay the £50 interview fee on the basis that I was already type-rated on the 737, and after a brief discussion they agreed. I did one year and ten months and flew seven hundred and ninety-nine hours exactly.

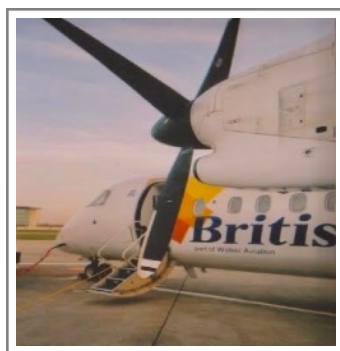
Then I came home — to Flybe in Jersey, on the Dash 8. I took a direct-entry command and flew the 200, the 300, and eventually the Q400. Another wonderful crew. Friends for life. After several years as a commander, though, something began to shift. I had been a pilot for two decades. I wanted to learn the rest of aviation — the business, the operations, the regulations — not just the aircraft.



Air UK Jersey base crew.



Captain Chris



JEA, British European, Flybe Dash 8 days, photo here in the Q400 cockpit with Helen Davies



Moving onto jets, my base training at Liverpool on the Boeing 737-300.

NEXT MONTH ... The pivot

Plane spotter's corner ... from Bob Sauvary' collection



D-ECSU Piper PA.28-140 Cherokee
on 8 May 1966 Jersey



D-EHBS Dornier 27B-1
on 14 February 1973 Rinteln



D-ELTR Reims Aviation S.A.built Cessna F.172H Skyhawk
on 4 October 1973 Wevelgem



D-EELG Putzer Elster B
on 5 June 1982 Stauning



OH-PIL Piper PA.25-235 Pawnee
on 20 August 1985 Nummela



D-EAEZ Morane Saulnier MS.893A-180 Commodore.
on 29 July 1988 Moulins



D-FEHD Hispano HA.1112-M1L Buchon
on 21 August 1988 Yverdon



VH-HPH DH.82A Tiger Moth
on 2 March 1990 Sandwell Kent

Plane spotter's corner ... *continued*



PH-DKF Reims Aviation S.A. built
on 27 July 1991 Moulins



PH-RVH Piel CP.328A Super Emerald
on 23 July 1993 Moulins



D-HNOF Elisport CH-7 Angel
on 28 June 1997 Koblenz



D-FOXY EKW C.3605 Schlepp
on 17 September 1998 Jersey

and finally ...

Do you have a story or tip to share?

We'd love to feature it in the newsletter. Email me at evelinehawkin@gmail.com

Anything else regarding the club, please email the committee at - committee@jerseyaeroclub.com