

A long overdue Newsletter!

It has been a little while since my last newsletter, my apologies - there is a lot to catch you up on! I hadn't quite realised how much I had lost track of time since starting the next stage of my training. To be clear, my goal is to keep these newsletters quarterly with some prayer letters in between. With that out of the way I hope you enjoy reading up on what I've been getting up to.



A view of the apron on a crisp winter's morning. Somehow I get to do this as my job.

What am I doing and where am I at?

Graduating University closed the theory chapter and marked the start of the practical element of the Engineering Training Scheme. I started working full time at RGV Aviation last September and I shall be here until September 2026 when I should hopefully have the relevant experience to apply for my B1.1 License.

RGV Aviation (those letters being the initials of the founder, Ralph Vincent –who still incidentally drops in every now and then) was founded in 1973 and located at Gloucestershire Airport about 50 minutes from Swindon, where I am currently living and commuting from each day. The commute can be longer some days as I am driving through a huge 460-million-pound A417 upgrade project called 'The Missing Link'. The drive has scenic elements, so I'm not complaining. On a clear day at work the Malvern Hills make for pleasant viewing when pushing aircraft around on the apron.

The Day to Day

I work full time 08:30 – 17:00 Monday to Friday. Each day presents me with new challenges and a good variety of work. One morning I may be servicing spark plugs and the next I am functionally testing hydraulic landing gears. The following afternoon I may be out in an aircraft taking notes on engine parameters during a ground run. One of the benefits of working at RGV is this variety due in part to the wide range of aircraft that we service. The licenced engineers are a wealth of knowledge and usually only too happy to pass on their knowledge. I obviously never get on their nerves with my persistent questions... Ahem.



On the left is the right hand engine of a Beechcraft Baron, and just behind it a Cirrus SR22 is hiding.

On the right is part of the tool kit that was donated to me by a very generous MAF donor.

The aircraft range from modern Turboprops such as TBM 700s or Piper M500s to smaller modern aircraft with piston engines such as the Cirrus SR22s. There are a wide variety of more classic piston engine aircraft such as Beechcraft Bonanzas & Barons to Pipers, Cessnas and the like. Working on these types of aircraft is brilliant experience for me as a MAF trainee due to the significant areas of overlap with MAF aircraft used out on our programmes. The TBMs use the same engine as the Cessna Caravans (the Pratt and Whitney PT6) for example.

It has been great to work alongside Ben Sibthorpe, an ex-MAF engineer, whom some of you know. He has helped me settle in and been a great source of knowledge and encouragement. It is also good to have another Christian brother in the workplace.



This is a few moments before carrying out a compressor-turbine wash on the Pratt and Whitney PT6 engine fitted to all TBM 700 series aircraft. A very nice piece of gear - expensive too.

Conversations around faith often come up and I am only too happy to talk about my faith with my colleagues. As there are two Matts in the workplace I have been widely dubbed 'Religious Matt'. A title I don't mind holding. Please pray for wisdom when these conversational opportunities come up and for me to be a good witness for Christ.

Progression

I am making good progress with my logbook, but the key is to stay on top of noting down my experience. This is often easier said than done at the end of a long day or week. I am learning new things every day and being reminded of concepts that were taught during lectures at university. Some concepts stick more when you physically apply them.



A cold morning carrying out a pre-inspection inspection.



An epic gift

Before I started my practical placement, I became the recipient of a Redbox tool kit that was kindly given to me by a MAF donor. Not a cheap investment I can assure you, but it has been integral in being able to go about my day-to-day tasks. There are a couple more tools that I will need to pick up along the way, but this more than covers the essentials.

In this picture I am replacing 6 vertical fin attachment bolts. Yes, the ones that actually keep it attached to the fuselage. This was also my first attempt at a selfie with no hands. I think it went well. Photo Cred: Ben Sibthorpe.

Praise Points

- I have settled in well at my placement with RGV
- A toolkit was donated to me to enable me to perform my work I am at a very suitable company to gain the relevant experience.

Prayer Points

- For continued good sleep and energy to carry out my work.
- For opportunities to be a good witness for Christ.
- To continue to stay close with the Lord in my personal walk with him

Thank you

Thank you for your continued support, and if you've made it this far in my newsletter, appreciate you taking the time to do so. Your prayers, financial contributions, and emails of encouragement are all highly appreciated and incredibly humbling.

I will be in touch again soon, and I look forward to hearing from you too.

You can keep up to date with what MAF are doing at <http://maf-uk.org>.