

# Spring Update



We hope you're well and that you have had a good Easter.

As a family, we've been making the most of the spring weather, spending more time outside in the garden and making trips to the coast when time allows. It has been a welcome change of pace after a busy start to the year, which I've shared more about below.



*Above - crabbing on a recent day trip to the coast.*

# Training Update

## ATPL Theory Update

2026 began with an intense period of revision as I prepared to sit my final two ATPL (Airline Transport Pilot Licence) exams. These exams (13 in total) form the academic foundation for commercial pilots and are a mandatory requirement for all professional pilots worldwide. After more than 18 months of relentless work and study, I am pleased to share that I have now successfully passed all of my ATPL exams. This has, without a doubt, been the hardest part of my training so far, and by far the most academically challenging set of exams I have ever undertaken. Therefore, it is a huge relief to have taken such a significant step towards becoming a Commercial Pilot.

## Instrument Rating

You may remember from our Christmas update that I had recently started training for my Instrument Rating (IR). This is an additional qualification that allows a pilot to fly using only the aircraft's instruments for navigation and control, rather than relying on visual references outside the cockpit window.

At the end of January, I returned to the Netherlands to continue this training. Much of this time was spent in the simulator at MATC (Mission Aviation Training Centre) throughout February and March, where I learned to manage and fly the departure, en-route, and arrival phases of flight in instrument conditions (with little to no visibility), before putting these skills into practice in the aircraft itself.

One of the key challenges of instrument flying, particularly in single-pilot operations, is the significantly higher workload involved. Unlike visual flying, where separation from terrain and other traffic is largely based on a 'see and avoid' principle, instrument flights must be conducted precisely along defined airways and departure and arrival routes, while maintaining continuous communication with Air Traffic Control. Managing all of this alone can be demanding, especially if your aircraft is not equipped with an autopilot.



*Above - the view from the Flight Simulator at MATC.*



*Above - a real Instrument Approach into Rotterdam during a period of poor visibility.*

A significant part of the training also focused on preparing for abnormal and emergency situations. In instrument conditions, failures involving the radio, GPS, or other flight instruments are more critical—particularly if multiple failures occur at the same time- because safe navigation is entirely dependent on this equipment.

We also considered the risks associated with aircraft icing. When flying through clouds in freezing conditions, an aircraft without additional protective equipment will accumulate ice, increasing weight, reducing performance, and making it more difficult to control. In more severe cases, ice can even restrict airflow to the engine, potentially causing it to fail.

For this reason, careful assessment of the weather conditions is essential to avoid icing altogether. However, as we all know, weather forecasts are only so accurate, so it was important that I learnt to recognise the early warning signs of icing and take appropriate action if encountered. This included some carefully managed exposure to real-world icing conditions as part of my training.



*Left - the main hangar at MATC during perfect flying conditions.*

Following this intense period of training, I am pleased to share that I successfully completed the course and was awarded my Instrument Rating at the end of March, following a practical exam.

It has been a challenging few months, and at times it felt like learning to fly all over again. However, it's been encouraging to finally reach this milestone. In many of the places where MAF serves, weather conditions can change very quickly. An Instrument Rating is therefore essential in helping ensure that remote communities can continue receiving the support that they need safely, regardless of the weather.



*Above - cruising between cloud layers over the Netherlands.*

# Family Life

On the home front, it's been a full few months for us as a family too.

**Rebekah** is continuing to work as a Nurse Practitioner. Her department has seen a sharp increase in footfall over the past few weeks, partly due to higher levels of tourism in the South West, which has kept her and her colleagues particularly busy.

**T**, our eldest daughter, has developed a new love of role-play, with her go-to game being a highly accurate re-enactment of the nursery drop-off and collection process. In addition to playing the role of the parent, she also enjoys acting as a nursery worker-taking observations on the iPad and calling parents at work to let them know their child is sick and must be collected from nursery immediately

**'A'**, our youngest daughter, took her first proper steps on board a P&O ferry as we were sailing to Calais en route to the Netherlands at the end of January. Despite finding her sea legs initially, this early success was followed by several weeks of trips and tumbles as she struggled to repeat it on dry land. However, she is now walking very confidently, and with the added height, is able to empty even more cupboards and drawers than before. She also stubbornly refuses to be put in her buggy and insists on walking regardless of the distances involved.

**As a family**, we were able to enjoy some time together in the Netherlands for the first half of my IR training throughout February. We explored the city of Nijmegen, took the girls out on bikes around Teuge, and visited the local markets and children's farms. We even somehow found ourselves driving through the middle of a rather chaotic Dutch Carnival parade-a unique experience that was probably best observed from the safety of the car!



*Above - cycling around Teuge and returning from the markets with plenty of Dutch produce.*

## What's Next?

After a quieter spring and start to the summer, my focus will primarily shift towards building support and fundraising for MAF. Later in the summer, I will return to MATC to continue gaining experience and flight hours as a solo pilot in instrument conditions. Alongside this, I will also begin a new four-week training course in preparation for my Commercial Pilot's Licence skills test with the Dutch Transport Authority.

# Praise Points

**We are hugely grateful to God, and to you - our family and friends - for the following answered prayers since our last prayer letter:**

For Jordan's progress in his recent training, including passing his final ATPL exams and obtaining his Instrument Rating.

For the slower pace of life we are now enjoying as a family after a particularly busy couple of years.

For the various personal connections we have made recently in our local area with current and former missionaries, as well as with individuals who have links with MAF.

# Prayer Requests

**We would really value your prayers for the following over the coming months:**

For wisdom and encouragement as we continue building financial and prayer support for our future ministry with MAF.

For Jordan, as he begins the next stage of training later this year, including further instrument flying and preparation for his Commercial Pilot's Licence skills test. There is still some uncertainty around exactly when this will take place, and whether it may also be possible to complete a multi-engine rating alongside it.

For quality family time and rest together over the quieter summer months.

For continued guidance and clarity as we look ahead to our future service with MAF and begin to finalise timelines, and for trust and patience as we continue preparing for wherever God may eventually lead us.

# Support Us

All MAF overseas staff are asked to build a team of partners who will accompany them in the work. God has called them to do through prayer and financial giving. This reflects the Biblical example of people using their different individual callings (to go, to give, and to pray) in order to serve isolated communities together.

We are incredibly grateful to everyone who has already chosen to support us in this way. Our service with MAF would genuinely not be possible without you.

If you would like to start supporting us through prayer or financial giving, please visit [www.maf-uk.org/ovetoncox](http://www.maf-uk.org/ovetoncox). You are also welcome to email us or reach out directly at any time.

**All donations go directly to MAF UK and are used to offset the costs of training and to support MAF's mission of bringing help, hope, and healing through aviation.**

Thank you again for your continued support, encouragement, and prayers. We really do appreciate every message, conversation, and prayer as we prepare for our future service with MAF.

With love, **The Overton-Cox Family**