

Newsletter May 2019

Field Performance

We have been back at Weston for over three years, so pilots have become used to a long, hard runway. With summer approaching, some pilots may think of visiting grass airfields.

If you have not flown from grass runways, you must get a checkout.

For a start, most grass fields are shorter than those with hard runways. Secondly, it takes longer to get airborne from the grass and the technique is different.

We use the soft field technique for takeoff which means that we open up to full power against the brakes with the stick held right back. Check that you are getting full power; the minimum static RPM is 2250, but we usually get a bit over 2300.

Keep the stick back during the takeoff roll until the nosewheel is just off the ground and keep it in that attitude until liftoff. As you become airborne, you will need to relax the back pressure slightly to maintain the correct attitude as the centre of rotation changes from the wheels to the centre of gravity.

The first speed to aim for is 62 kts, which gives the best angle of climb. As soon as you are clear of any close-in obstacles, increase to 70 kts.

All takeoffs from grass fields should be made into wind. You will hear pilots saying that going downhill is better, but that would only apply to very steep hills and we don't fly into places like that.

Weight is important. Aeroplanes are often operated near their maximum weight but it's worth remembering that, in the Robin, 100 lbs (45 kg) less means a ground roll reduction of 35 metres and a takeoff distance to 50 feet of 70 metres less.

We have made life easy for pilots by providing tabulated performance tables on the website and in the Quick Reference Handbook.

Don't forget to apply the 1.33 safety factor to the basic figures. Pressure altitude, temperature and wind can all be critical, so if there is any doubt, don't attempt it.

The "It will probably be alright" attitude can kill you so **do the calculations!**

Besides considering the takeoff performance, we should look at the approach and landing. Some pilots insist on adding "10 knots for Granny" to the approach speed and this often results in aeroplanes being stuck in the far hedge! The landing distance goes up as the square of the groundspeed, so approaching at 80 kts instead of 70 kts increases the distance by 30%. If you are unsure, **GO AROUND.**

RPM check at takeoff

A low RPM at the start of the takeoff could be caused by running on only one magneto due to mishandling of the power check. The takeoff distance will be longer and the rate of climb will be reduced by approximately 150 fpm.

Securing the controls correctly

We secure the controls from flapping about in the wind by fastening the seat belts around the stick. This should be done in such a way that the webbing of the belt is in contact with the stick. **It is wrong to fasten it in such a way that the metal buckle is in contact with the stick.** Metal-to-metal contact will cause damage.



Anonymous Payments!

When members make payments to the club account, can they please ensure that they add a note to show what the payment is for or, if that's not possible, please text or email John Scrivener with the details? In spite of his many talents, John doesn't count mind-reading among them and he is regularly faced with payments with no identification.