

SECOND HAND AIRCRAFT

Anyone considering the purchase of a second hand aircraft should be absolutely clear about the difference between a certificated aircraft (or another domestic product) and a homebuilt. Despite sharing a generic name such as Jabiru or RV-6, all amateur built aircraft are all different. Each one has been built by a different person to a different set of personal standards. When built through the LAA system, a minimum safe level of airworthiness is assured at build by the LAA Inspector, but there will always be more variation in build standard and interpretation of the manufacturers instructions on an amateur compared with a production aircraft. Buyers should satisfy themselves that they know what they are buying, to what degree it has been approved for flight and even how much it weighs. Ask your LAA inspector to look it over by all means but he can provide no guarantee nor is it fair to expect one.

The following documents should be checked as part of any pre-purchase inspection.

1. (a) Permit to Fly

The lead document issued by the CAA.

1. (b) Operating Limitations

This shows the current operating limitations of the aircraft.

1. (c) Certificate of Validity

This shows whether the Permit has expired or, if current, when it will expire. This is the document that the LAA will issue each year on receipt of a successful Permit renewal application.

2. Certificate of Registration

This shows who is registered with the CAA as the aircraft's owner(s).

3. Airframe and Engine logbooks

Check that regular entries have been made and suitably signed by a LAA inspector. Log book entries will probably make reference to separate worksheets. As such, these are part of the aircraft's legal maintenance record, and should transfer with an aircraft.

4. Weight and Balance documents

This will show if aircraft is overweight or out of balance. Microlights must be re-weighed every five years. Other aircraft are recommended to be re-weighed every ten years, or as required by other actions.