



Sun 'n Fun 2026: Pure Aviation Magic at Krugersdorp Airfield

By Laura McDermid

Under the most glorious highveld blue skies and bathed in that golden, life-affirming South African sunshine, Sun 'n Fun 2026 unfolded at Jack Taylor Airfield in Krugersdorp from 24 to 27 September like a dream we had all been waiting for, and what a spectacular, heart-swelling success it turned out to be.

Preparations had begun early in the year through the seamless collaboration of the Krugersdorp Flying Club and EAA Chapter 973. The airfield itself is a natural stage for an event of this scale: smooth tar taxiways, pristine runways, a welcoming grass alternative, and acres of parking for both cars and aeroplanes. It was, quite simply, a no-brainer.



A mini Oshkosh – camping under the wing!

The Jack Taylor Apron – a festival of aviation!

Of course, planning an event of this magnitude is never without its challenges. From ensuring enough dustbins and preventing sewage overflows to arranging mobile ablutions, generators, a beer tent, and food vendors, the Krugersdorp Flying Club handled the operational side with quiet determination and aplomb.



The Puzey camp with their Bakeng Duece, photo Werner Pienaar

Meanwhile, Chapter 973 took on the aviation heart of the matter — sourcing exhibitors and sponsors (the true backbone of any successful fly-in), navigating endless marketing campaigns, organising forums and workshops, and crafting a programme that would keep every aviation soul inspired.

We were extraordinarily fortunate with our sponsors, exhibitors and display aircraft owners. Their belief in the vision made the weekend possible, and our deepest thanks go out to every single one of them.



Movie Night in the hangar

Thursday was a relaxed exhibitor set-up day under those same endless blue skies. That evening, Chapter 973 hosted a cosy movie night in the hangar. Memphis Belle (the 1990 classic) filled the screen while the wonderful 973 'ops' team served popcorn and hot dogs. It was pure camaraderie — laughter, shared stories, and the warm glow of friendship under the whimsical shimmer of fairy lights in the hangar.



Tarryn Myburgh's SAPFA Rally ever popular workshop and briefing

Friday morning dawned bright and clear. A Navigation Rally briefing hosted by Iaan and Tarryn Myburgh from SAPFA, kicked things off, with eager faces (some familiar, some brand new) soaking up every word. Among the newcomers was Sally Fleck and her eager son Benjamin, whose infectious joy became one of the weekend's brightest highlights. Then came a truly special moment: the official launch of the EAA Chapter 973 Youth Aviation Development Programme, Level One. Held in

the hangar of Chris and John Shaw, twenty carefully selected youngsters — many of whom had previously flown with Young Eagles — got hands-on with aviation. Their delighted squeals as they launched model aeroplanes into the bright sunshine said everything. The future of our passion looked very bright indeed.



Chapter 973 Youth Development Program, photo Eddie Pienaar

Workshops filled the rest of the day. Alex Smith from Cirrus Flight Academy gave a fascinating presentation on the Cirrus Airframe Parachute System (CAPS) — that remarkable whole-aircraft recovery system that has saved so many lives.



Cirrus CAPS presentation

Century Avionics followed with an equally well-presented talk on the new Garmin Axis avionics suite.

In the afternoon, Peter Geldenhuys of Axella Aeronautical Engineering ran a practical composite workshop, letting participants repair a wheel spat using his specialised techniques. Later, the Orion STOL competition brought Runway 26 to life. Agile aeroplanes hovered on the edge of the stall, and once again Dale de



The Composite Workshop by Pieter Geldenhuis of Axella Aeronautical Engineering

Klerk proved unbeatable in the superb Orion Cub ZU-IVS. In the light/ultralight class, J.J. le Grange took the honours in his capable Thunderbird.



Dale de Klerk's winning take-off in the Orion Cub

That evening, Megan Stevenson of Infinite Aviation hosted an aviation quiz that packed the hangar with at least sixty enthusiastic competitors in teams of six. Healthy rivalry, plenty of laughter, and sharp aviation knowledge filled the air. Team @Jack's emerged victorious — a fitting end to a perfect day



Rob Jeffrey and Jon Kotwicki (live from Alaska) talk about fishing and flying in Alaska



The Friday evening braai prior to Megan's well attended Aviation Quiz night

Saturday opened with a live stream by Jon Kotwicki, who shared captivating tales of floatplanes and back-country flying in Alaska. Greg Blyth of Sling Aircraft then spoke with quiet pride about the company's extraordinary journey — another proudly South African success story — and the exciting Sling Twin project now taking shape.



Greg Blyth – "The Other Side of Sling"

Megan Stevenson returned with a riveting talk on the human factors that influence pilot performance, reminding us how small decisions can cascade if left unchecked.



Megan Stevenson's fascinating presentation – "When Good Pilots Make Bad Decisions"



Comet Aviation's Niren Chotoki – Rotax Workshop

In Hangar E29, Niren Chotoki of Comet Aviation Supplies demonstrated a carburettor synchronisation on a Rotax 912. What many pilots regard as a daunting task suddenly looked achievable — empowering owners to take greater ownership of their machines. Kevin Hopper then welcomed us into the Orion workshop for a talk and tour. The Orion Cub is a shining example of South African ingenuity: a high-wing, tandem-seat, Rotax-powered STOL machine designed for real-world adventure. Beautiful examples filled the hangar, and word of the forthcoming side-by-side version had everyone buzzing with anticipation. By mid afternoon the northerly wind picked up considerably, and flags snapped to attention in obedient salute to FAKR's well earned reputation for lively breezes.



Pure mastery – Andre van Zyl's Gyro display

Despite the strong gusts, the air display — that glittering centrepiece of the entire weekend - commenced unabated. A Magni Gyro gyrocopter piloted by André van Zyl, performed with such precision and energy that the crowd gasped more than once, momentarily convinced it was about to spin out of control... only to realise it was pure mastery.



A polished performance by resident Navion Team



The balletic 3 Ship Sling Formation Team

Sling's 3-ship fleet followed in balletic formation. Despite the variable crosswinds they flew with accurate precision, a true testament to the aircrafts' remarkable capabilities. Legendary display pilot Juba Joubert then took to the sky in an Aérospatiale Lama, putting the helicopter through a breathtaking routine that showcased both the machine's capabilities and his extraordinary skill.



Juba Joubert in the Aérospatiale Lama

Two gleaming de Havilland Chipmunks from the Classic Flying Collection based in Springs, flew in graceful, symmetrical formation; their classic lines cutting cleanly against the blue.



The Classic Flying Collection Chipmunk Formation

Finally, Reyno Coetzer and Mike George closed the show in their North American Navions, trailing beautiful smoke trails in a polished formation display that left everyone with wide grins and full hearts.

The entire flying programme ran flawlessly under the sharp eyes of the Civil Aviation Authority team. Special thanks to Keith Fryer of AirBoss, Sally Fleck and the KFC committee, who managed to secure the necessary approvals.



Kevin Hopper – the Orion Factory Tour

That evening the awards and prize-giving filled Hangar E10. What a privilege it was to celebrate the incredible variety of experimental and recreational aircraft in South Africa — from elegant rag-and-tube classics to Derek Frasca's magnificent Radial Rocket ZU-IJP, which took Grand Champion honours. Every aircraft told a story of passion, craftsmanship and dedication. The evening reached a sparkling climax with a grand lucky-draw prize, sponsored by Julian Maduray from Elev8 Risk Partners - a full year's aviation insurance cover - the most generous prize in Sun 'n Fun history. The worthy winner was John Shaw, a perfect and thoroughly deserved recipient.



Winner of the Elev8 Risk Partners prize, a year's free aviation insurance, Jack Taylor resident, John Shaw

Throughout the weekend, no one went hungry or thirsty. Food vendors offered everything from ciabatta pork-belly rolls and breakfast buns to fresh coffee, doughnuts and waffles — all enjoyed under those perfect blue skies.



No one went hungry or thirsty with offerings of wide variety of food vendors

With the long shadow of the 12-year rule finally lifting and many previously grounded aircraft able to shine once more, this event showed what is possible when the aviation community works hand-in-hand with the authorities - challenges are not insurmountable when we find common ground and pull together. Sun 'n Fun 2026 proved something profound; this was more than an airshow or a fly-in. It was a celebration of every facet of recreational aviation — the pilots, the builders, the maintainers, the young dreamers, the exhibitors, the organisers, and the pure joy of flight itself. Teamwork truly made the dream work.

Sun 'n Fun at Krugersdorp's Jack Taylor Airfield is in its infancy; yet already the foundations of something enduring are clear. By establishing and cherishing a reliable home base, just as the original Florida Sun 'n Fun in the USA has done for more than half a century, we give this joyful gathering the solid wings it needs for steady growth, ever-better facilities, deeper partnerships and a lasting identity within our wonderful South African aviation family. Thank you to every single person who helped create what many are already calling one of the finest aviation events in recent South African history. We cannot wait to welcome you all back next year — same place, same time, under those same glorious endless skies



The busy display apron featured many unique aircraft



Jack Taylor – the perfect setting for an aviation festival!



Cruiserdorp!



Chapter 1503 participants, Lesley and Clint du Toit in the KFA Safari and Brett Williams in a Bearhawk





1st Place STOL Competition Ultralight

Division

JJ le Grange, Thunderbird ZU ECY

2nd Place STOL Competition Ultralight

Division

Matt Human Bat Hawk

3rd Place STOL Competition Ultralight

Division

Sean Cronin Bat Hawk

1st Place STOL Competition

Orion Cub ZU IVS

Take-off 65 meters/ Landing 85 Meters

2nd Place STOL Competition

Orion Cub ZU IVS

Take-off 90 meters/ Landing 177 Meters

SAPFA Air Navigation Rally

1st Place

Paul Ferraris & Grenville Mills

Socata Rallye ZU AJC

Total Points 282

2nd Place

Rob Jonkers & Johan van Schalkwyk

C182 ZS IVC

Total Points 528

Special Mention

Sally Fleck & Benjamin RV-6

Total Points (Second Attempt) 309

Longest Distance Flown to the Event

1st Place

Kevin Fouche Bristell ZU JAX Plettenberg Bay

2nd Place (Shared)

Scott Williams Bearhawk ZU ISP and

Lesley & Clint du Toit KFA Safari ZU LNJ

Underberg

Longest Distance Travelled to the Event

Etienne & Erna Bekker

Cape Town

Aircraft Judging

Sun 'n Fun 2026 Grand Champion Aircraft

Derek Frasca

Radial Rocket ZU IJP

Best Local Factory Built Aircraft

Riaan Denner

Sling ZU DFU

Best Restoration

Mike Puzey

C150 ZS PVY

Best Production Built NTCA Aircraft

Pierre Dippenaar

RV10 ZU NOL (Built by Robin Coss Aviation)

Best Vintage Aircraft

Bjorn Buchner

Aeronca Champ ZS BBS

Best Warbird Aircraft

Cliff Lotter

Auster Mk5 ZS VUG

Best Microlight Aircraft

Martin du Preez

QuikR ZU KWK



Photo Andre Venter



Best Local Factory Built Aircraft
Riaan Denner Sling HW ZU DFU

Best Restoration
Mike Puzey C150 ZS PVY



Pierre Dippenaar
RV10 ZU NOL (Built by Robin Coss Aviation)



Best Vintage Aircraft
Bjorn Buchner Aeronca Champ ZS BBS



Best Microlight Aircraft
Martin du Preez QuikR ZU KWK



Best Warbird Aircraft
Cliff Lotter Auster Mk5 ZS VUG





1st Place STOL Competition
Dale de Klerk Orion Cub ZU IVS



1st Place STOL Competition Ultralight Division
JJ le Grange, Thunderbird ZU EGY



1st Place ANR
Paul Ferraris & Grenville Mills Socata Rallye ZU AJC



2nd Longest Distance Flown to Event
Scott Williams and Lesley & Clint du Toit, Underberg



Longest Distance Flown to Event
Kevin Fouche Bristell ZU JAX Plettenberg Bay



2nd Place ANR
Rob Jonkers & Johan van Schalkwyk C182 ZS IVC



3rd Place STOL Ultralight Division
Sean Cronin Bat Hawk



EAA Sun 'n Fun 2026

A BIG thank you to all our sponsors, exhibitors and presenters





Calendar



Every Saturday Morning | Coffee @ Jack's

Join us for coffee, rusks and EAA camaraderie at our hangar every Saturday morning.

Open from 07h30. Breakfast available at the Krugersdorp Flying Club Clubhouse

Saturday 19th October | Monthly Gathering | 09h00 @Jack's

Capt. Colin Green, hit by an SA-7 missile while flying a C-47 filled with military VIP passengers including the Chief of the Army.

Ordering the passengers around to regulate the Centre of Gravity, and using flaps and power to control the pitch, Captain Green eased the damaged aircraft onto the tarmac.

He was later awarded the Chief of the SADF Commendation for his exceptional flying skills.



Saturday 14th November | Monthly Gathering & AGM | 09h00 @ Jack's

Join us as we celebrate of first year of revival! A full review on our year's activities, what we have done and what we have achieved! As per our Chapter Constitution, office bearers are required to serve for two years, elections will not be necessary, but we are always looking for volunteers to join us in running this exciting and dynamic chapter!



Saturday 12th December | Chapter 973 Christmas Gathering | 09h00 @ Jack's

Our last gathering before we all depart for our annual holiday, please bring a small gift for a local children's home



CHAPTER 973

Merchandise



Show your colours! EAA Chapter 973's **Merch Shop** offers a range of bright golf shirts, caps, hats and *now* – **golf shirts with pockets!**

Cash or cards accepted, come and visit us @ **Jack's**, we're open every Saturday morning for coffee, camaraderie and perhaps a breakfast at 26 South!



JOIN OUR CHAPTER!

Become part of our dynamic EAA Chapter! Chapter 973, based at one of Gauteng's best run and most friendly GA airfields, Jack Taylor, Krugersdorp, is open for membership. Our homebase, overlooking the runway, offers a warm and friendly place to hang out with fellow aviators and aviation enthusiasts.



JOIN HERE