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# The record breaker

Steve Wood has dozens of flying world records, but at 60 he still has his eyes on more and is plotting some of his biggest challenges yet. Watch out Lewis Hamilton!



Steve's trusty GOOFY bristles with navigation aids and auto-pilot, and has extra fuel tanks in the wings and optional ferry tanks too. The maximum range would do the California to Hawaii leg of a round-the-world trip, usually the longest at nearly 2400 miles.

**Q| You've just turned 60, and want to race Lewis Hamilton!**

**A|** Well, the day I turned 60 last month, I announced an idea I have of trying to set up a race between myself and Lewis, perhaps around Silverstone. We've both got interesting ways of viewing the 'nought to 60' debate – him in seconds, mine in the number of records over the years! I think it would be a good race – Hamilton in his McLaren, and me in an Extra 300. I've flown one, and it's a beautiful plane. It does everything you want.

**Q| You're more renowned for GOOFY, though**

**A|** Yes, N-600FY. I've got 29 officially FAI ratified records in her now, and even more which have yet to be ratified, so I think 70 all in all. Believe it or not, the ratification process is what's holding up my other plans to do more, as it takes such a long time and a lot of money to get each one certified.

**Q| GOOFY is a self-build, how did that come about?**

**A|** I love a challenge, so opted to build my own aircraft. I'd built my own home and car by this stage! She managed to get two transatlantic crossings under her wings before she'd even been completed, one coming over from the factory in the States, then another transporting her back from the UK when I moved to Florida, where I finished the build. It still ranks as my proudest achievement in flying, building my own plane.

**Q| You shot to prominence doing your round-America flights...**

**A|** I did two 'four corners' flights in the States to highlight charities I work with. I became the first UK pilot to do the four corners flight in a home-build in 2005, which I did in 12 days, and then repeated it last year in seven days. I also work with the EAA's Young Eagles programme which encourages pilots to take youngsters on a flight to show them what flying is about, and I managed to fit eight in during the first attempt. We set up a chapter of the EAA in the UK, which was a first.

**Q| Have your record attempts gone smoothly?**

**A|** Well, I've had my fair share of weather but only one forced landing because of a technical – the engine exploded over Ohio! I had to put it down in a soya field, but she came down perfectly. It's one of the reasons I chose the Glastar, it has a very good reliability record and is a great plane to fly.

**Q| You are due to be presented the Scott-Farnie Award from the Air League Council by Prince Philip – superb recognition**

**A|** It's for furthering education of flying in the community, and previous awardees included the PFA and Royal Aero Society, so I'm hugely honoured. I've spent years getting people interested in planes and flying, and combining that with helping sick, disabled, and life-limited children. Flying Scholarships for the Disabled is a really brilliant charity.



**■ A surveyor by profession, Steve has seen more of the world from above than he probably ever has done on the ground!**

**Q| This work dates back nearly two decades...**

**A|** Back in the '90s, I spent a lot of time trying to get emergency helicopter services set up to help accident response, and in 1998 I established the Greenhawk Trust that gets underprivileged or unwell kids in planes – just a great experience for them. I have been so busy lately that this has been a bit sidelined, but I really want to get Greenhawks up to full speed again. If anyone can help, please let me know.

**Q| Clearly this isn't 60 and out; have you lots planned?**

**A|** Well, I would still like to complete a round-the-world flight. I started planning one for the Millennium but they are epics to arrange. I spent a lot of time with my friend Hans Georg Schmid planning and he completed two on his way to something like 168 records – the most. Tragically, he died last year trying to complete a transatlantic flight, and I think his overall record should be left untouched. But, I would love to do the round-the-world flight in a homebuilt as a nod to him as a friend. It's all about sponsors really, but it would be a great thing to do. Perhaps with this being the 90th anniversary of the RAF, 90 records would be the thing to aim for.

**W:** [www.worldrecordpilot.org](http://www.worldrecordpilot.org)

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