It’s time once again to jet off on holiday – but make sure you have your seatbelt fastened...

by Dicken Ross

Are you reading this on a plane on your way to sunnier climes? Have you noticed the ride is a bit bumpier than it used to be? In this month’s cover story we hear how global warming is creating more turbulence on transatlantic flights. Does that matter? It sure matters to some passengers who don’t much like flying in the first place but it also matters to those who want to get their fast-more turbulence means longer journey times. It also means higher fuel consumption and more carbon emissions.

Of course, a few bumps in the air won’t bother E&T readers, who have the utmost faith in aeronautical engineers and a sound understanding of the statistics of risk. But perhaps you have a travelling companion who is of a more nervous disposition and, if you have just been told to return to your seats and fasten you seatbelts, you might like to show them the feature on p52 and in particular these reassuring words from Michelle Fitzgerald, Boeing’s deputy capability leader for structural testing: “We push every piece of every product to its limits – and beyond – to ensure the planes can easily handle any situation they are likely to encounter. I don’t stress when I fly. I’ve seen those wings bend 26 feet – I have supreme confidence in our product and I know that they will withstand anything they come across in flight.”

So sit back and relax. But wait, you didn’t have time to get any local currency? How come across in flight.”

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