

Thomas Martin - The Swire Scholarship 2017

Over the last ten years I have worked in several roles within the aviation industry. The most rewarding part of my career has always been training new staff. I decided to apply online for the Scholarship nearing the end of a working holiday in Australia and was invited to London for an interview in May. I was absolutely thrilled to be told a week later that I had been selected as one of the three winners and that I could start training to become a Flight Instructor.

Having previously flown with several instructors and examiners who had recommended Dorothy Saul-Pooley, I looked no further than the ATO she runs at Shoreham in West Sussex (Pooleys-FIS). Shoreham is also my local airfield, where I began learning to fly in 2006.



I started the FI course in June after passing the pre-entry flight test and taking time to get my theoretical knowledge up to scratch. The Air pilots manuals (book 1-7), combined with the questions in CAA standards doc 10 definitely helped me prepare.

The course comprised of 25 hrs of dual training, 5 hrs of mutual flying (with another trainee FI for consolidation) and 125 hrs of ground school, which was mostly completed one-on-one!

As a bonus, I also attended a two-day Instructor refresher seminar that Dorothy held. The dual flights covered all exercises of the PPL syllabus including exercise 11 - Spinning. As Dorothy's PA28 is not approved for spinning, we used a 152 Aerobat for this lesson.

Dorothy demonstrated how to give the pre-flight brief and lesson, then I gave back the same Lesson whilst Dorothy acted as the student, using her stage name 'Mavis'. Mavis made lots of typical student errors during her training with me, some more subtle than others...

The course progressed at a comfortable pace, with a maximum of two hours flying per day, and lots of time for theory or preparing lectures. I have learnt so much from Dorothy (and 'Mavis'), It really was a huge privilege to complete my training with such an experienced Instructor (over 10,000hrs) and past Master.



In September 2017, two weeks after passing the FI assessment of competence, I started working as a Flight Instructor for FTA-Global at Shoreham. I am teaching students enrolled on modular PPL courses as well as Integrated students through phases 1-3 of their training to become commercial pilots. I am paid a regular salary and instruct 5 days a week on a modern fleet of DA40 aircraft equipped with G1000.

My first flight with a real student was very exciting. I taught ex4.1 - Effects of controls, hopefully he enjoyed it as much as I did. The FI course really had prepared me well. Soon I plan to upgrade to teach at Night, and am looking forward to helping out at FTA's satellite base in Spain.

I would like to say a huge thank you to the Honourable Company of Air Pilots and to The Swire Charity Trust for the fantastic opportunity you have given me. I am very grateful for all your support in helping me reach my dream.

