



Stephen Daly – Air BP Sterling Scholarship Report

For as long as I can remember, becoming a pilot was always my ambition. In the following few pages I will elaborate on the best Summer of my life, obtaining my PPL! I encountered The Honourable Company of Air Pilots a year prior to the PPL Scholarship. I was extremely fortunate to be awarded a Gliding Scholarship, with the financial assistance of the Air Safety Trust. That week at Portsmouth reaffirmed my intentions of becoming a pilot. While at Cobham House for the Gliding Scholarship interview, Angie brought to my attention that I would be eligible to apply for a PPL Scholarship in the proceeding year.

By January, the applications were available on the website. I must've drafted close to 20 applications, before I hesitantly sent the final one during the month of March. A month later, I was ecstatic to be informed that I was selected as one of the 24 applicants for interview. Following the news, I eagerly began my preparation for the big occasion. I knew I had one chance to make a good impression, so it was vital to attend prepared. As I'm from south-west Ireland, you might wonder how I planned to carry out my training at a UK flying school. At the time of writing my application, I spoke to my sister (who lives in Yorkshire), asking her would it be possible to stay at her accommodation if I was successful. The proposed journey to and from Sherburn Aero Club would consist of 2 trains and a bicycle ride, totalling 4 hours of commuting every day.

The day finally came – May 1st. My mum obliged that she had to come to London for moral support - I couldn't object! After a breakfast in a nearby restaurant, I proceeded towards Dowgate Hill House. To say I was nervous, was a drastic understatement! Waiting in reception, I had the opportunity to converse with other applicants. Within a few moments, our nerves slowly subsided, and Angie came to greet us. I then met Tricia, who ushered me to the interview panel – Steve, Ollie and Suzanne. Shortly after the interview, I had to complete a mental dexterity test. Before long, I was back on the flight home with my mum, pondering about the negatives and apprehensive of what result awaited.



Walking out of school the following day, I received an email notification. I couldn't believe it! The overwhelming sense of achievement was something I cannot explain.

Training commenced in early June. Before getting the go-ahead, I took several trips to Sherburn Aero Club, to become accustomed with the route and to make initial contact with the club. Alastair, the CFI made no delay in integrating me into the environment! In retrospect, the club was the most

accommodating organisation I had the pleasure of meeting. Alastair took the time out of his busy schedule, to outline a plan of action for the duration of my training. I immediately got the impression that I was treated like an individual, rather than a number. He catered to my needs, ensuring that my time at the club would be extremely productive.

A typical day consisted of waking up at 06:00. I would brief and read up on what the day entailed on my commute, arrive at 08:30, and typically fly twice during the day. By the time I was home it was usually 19:00, so I'd attempt to study close to 3 hours, before repeating the process again! In conjunction with flying, I completed the 9 CAA exams as I advanced through the training.

The first flights in the AT3 were orientated around general handling and upper air work, flying the aircraft accurately in all configurations. Next, I progressed to the circuit phase of the training. I thoroughly enjoyed this portion as Sherburn has 3 runways, and each circuit is slightly unconventional, due to noise abatement procedures. I executed glide, flapless and normal approaches, while also coping with an EFATO (Engine Failure After Take-



Off) scenario. On the 25th of June I completed my first solo flight! I had the expectation of soloing on the day, but as we decelerated on our final landing, Paul (my instructor) assumed controls and I relinquished, thinking I blew my opportunity. However, as we taxied past the vacating point to park, I realized the anticipation was over! The moment was sheer bliss, yet, I didn't have time to comprehend the whole situation! After completing my solo consolidation hours, it was time to leave the ATZ, and conquer navigation. Simultaneously, I fulfilled the instrument flying training under "foggles", radio navigation, advanced turning, practice forced landings (PFLs), precautionary landings, low level navigation and diversions.

Undoubtedly, navigation was the most rewarding aspect of the training. The first couple of dual navigation sorties saw us track east of the field, with emphasis on flying accurately. Following 3 consecutive lessons of dual navigation, it was time to do it solo! I arrived in the morning, assuming my route would not alter significantly, but of course, the weather did not permit! The amended route resulted in flying a short leg to Harrogate, talking to Linton LARS for the entirety of the flight. Inbound, I changed frequency, and immediately became aware of the circuit congestion. Nonetheless, I conformed to the pattern, and became established on final moments later. With another aircraft on the active during that time, I elected to go around. As I did so, the canopy popped! The phrase "aviate, navigate, communicate" has never entered my mind so fast! Nothing was structurally wrong with the aircraft, so I prioritised flying above all else. After I landed, the objectives of The Honourable Company of Air Pilots entered my mind once more, and I hope this circumstance is an example of good airmanship, aligning to the beliefs of the company.

Another vivid memory of my solo navigation flights was acquiring a zone transit through Leeds Class D airspace, while receiving traffic information on an inbound 757 who was capturing the glide slope 1000ft above me!

The next subsequent milestone was my solo QXC. The route contained 2 land aways at Beverley and Nottingham, consisting of a 153nm journey! Once I consolidated the route with my instructor, it was time to gain PPR, book out and get on my way. Before leaving my instructor, Vernon, gave me stellar advice – “Don’t let them turn over the QXC sheet. If they do, you’ve probably messed up”! The first leg to Beverley was flawless. On arrival, I went in to present my QXC form and pay the landing fee. The gentlemen present was extremely nice. Although, the dynamic of the conversation changed drastically when he turned the page over, to enter something in the remarks. Receiving the form off him, I turned the page over to reveal “N/A.... Perfect Landing :)”. Looking back, the abrupt silence for the last few moments of our conversation was worth the kind remark! The route to Nottingham went uneventful also, and before long, I was back at Sherburn informing everyone of my escapades!



Once my solo QXC was completed, my logbook totalled 32 hours. Having covered the syllabus, my instructors and I decided to send me on some scenic solo navs. The following day involved a flight to Wickenby via a touch and go at Humberside, with zone transits through Doncaster and Leeds. That trip conjures up many memories, in hindsight. As I approached Humberside I tuned the ATIS to become acquainted to the conditions. The surface wind was right on my crosswind component! The satisfaction of landing as a 737-800 is holding short, is something I cannot express in words! Additionally, having ATC tell me to report visual with a Cessna Citation on climb out while in Doncaster’s CTR, was a moment I’ll cherish for the rest of my career. Returning home, via a zone transit at Leeds, ATC requested me to deviate off my track, due to a 737-800 in the circuit. Inside busy airspace really developed my confidence, aiding me to develop better situational awareness as well as giving me experience in relation to future commercial flying.

The remainder of my hour building brought many amazing experiences. From flying up the east coast to a technical up-hill landing at Bagby, and even seeing an RAF tornado descend into Conningsby!



Each adventure brought me one step closer to the dreaded mock test! I found the exercise extremely beneficial, not only with regards to the actual flying portion, but the ground brief also. Peter Jackson, my mock test instructor, ensured no stone would be left unturned. We briefed every eventuality, giving me complete assurance.

What followed, was the **REAL** skill test! I met my examiner early on the day of the test, received the route off him, confirmed our aircraft performance would be satisfactory for the flight and headed off! The route was Selby - Skegness - OTR VOR - Selby, with a diversion expected on my second leg. The weather was exceptional, we couldn't have asked for better conditions! Over the VOR station I was asked to divert to Beverley (which was extremely familiar to me!). I produced a track, heading and ETA. We then moved onto the general handling portion, and headed back to the airfield for 4 circuits. Monitoring the hobbs as we shut down, I couldn't believe how fast the time elapsed! To hear "congratulations, you've passed", filled me with elation!

There are many people I'd like to thank for making this experience so memorable. Firstly, I'd like to thank my 8 instructors for their continuous support. Each one brought their own experience, and Sherburn's common PPL syllabus made the transition from one to the other seamless. I liked the fact that each instructor has their own method of teaching something, so I could learn the best practices from more than one source. Without the community at Sherburn, I wouldn't have advanced through the training as well as I did. More specifically, the operations team. They provided me with the best support and encouragement, and always asked how I was progressing. Likewise, the members at Sherburn were always around to have a chat about anything aviation related. I had the opportunity to fly a C182, ST67 Firefly, RV7 and a C150, through the generosity of the members! Without hesitation, I would thoroughly recommend Sherburn Aero Club to learn how to fly.



Secondly, I would like to thank The Honourable Company of Air Pilots for selecting me for the scholarship. I can't thank them enough for their continuous support in the development of my career. I'd especially like to thank Angie, for checking in on my progress for the duration of my training! And finally, thank you to Air BP for funding the scholarship. They've been incredibly supportive, and interested in my ambitions for the future. My sincerest thanks again to Air BP and The Honourable Company of Air Pilots. Without them, I would never have a PPL at 17!



I intend to build hours this year, contributing towards a (F)ATPL, and undertaking a modular course while studying Aeronautical Engineering at University. At the same time, I'll apply to several cadetship programmes. I implore anyone who's actively pursuing a career in aviation to apply! It's been an immense catalyst in advancing my career faster than I would have ever anticipated. I'm eternally grateful to be the recipient of such a scholarship, and take comfort in knowing the gap between the flight deck and I has been bridged closer through this scheme.