

Week 1

What a first week! Ten and a bit hours of flying completed and perhaps my patter is becoming less babbling and more bumbling. There's still plenty more finesse to be learnt.

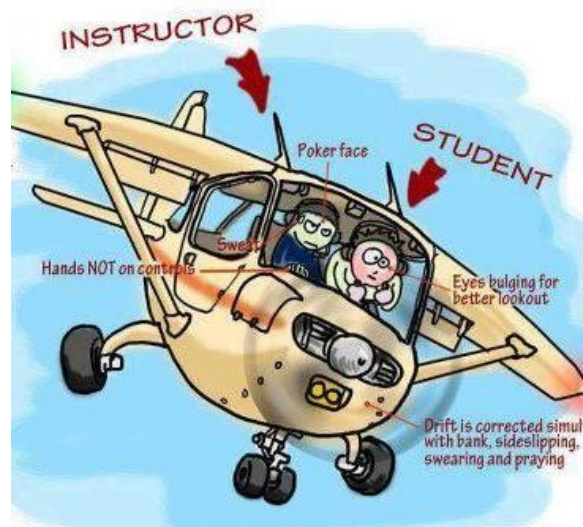
My initial apprehension was dispelled with a quick pre-flight entry test for the first time flying from the right-hand seat. This sortie was some of the sloppiest flying I have ever done; although I'm told on good authority that this is not unusual, I still felt embarrassed by the quality of my flying. Nevertheless, shortly after we were straight into the flying for the course; back to basics with Ex 4a Effects of Controls.



With the hot and sunny weather this week it has been easy to get into the air, although a little imagination has been required when describing the attitude in relation to the horizon. Haze has made finding the airfield again rather entertaining occasionally. The thermic conditions have also made level flight futile; I have been pattering for an idle power decent with a positive rate of climb!

All the initial flying exercises have been taking me back to basics, refining my flying accuracy and skill. Some day a student is going to have my demonstration as their example of good airmanship. I need to be good.

Towards the end of the week my "students", Doris and Eric, (marvellously played by my instructors Peter and John) have started to put me through my paces in the circuit. They have been following my talk-throughs to the letter and making me sweat near the ground. There is a lot of judgement still to be learnt. When is just the right moment to take control? They have also made mistakes such as finding the mixture lever instead of the carburetor heater. That really did get my attention, I'm sure it won't be the last time either!



When I've not been flying, I've been practicing the pre-flight briefs and revising some theoretical knowledge. It's been a long while since I have described and drawn out how instruments work, how fronts develop, or the VMC minima in UK airspace. Peter and John have been reminding me of the things that I do know, just that I can't remember right now. The real test has been when Doris or Eric ask a question and I have to explain in a way they understand. Lots more practice required here!



In summary, this first week has been extremely hard work but also very rewarding. I've done a huge amount of flying in a short space of time refining my own skills all while sat in the "wrong" seat and learning to (or at least trying to) patter coherently. I'm looking forward to the next few weeks and moving through the flying exercises. But will I ever be able to send Doris solo?

Joe Hadley

The Honourable Company of Air Pilots Scholarship 2021 Flight Instructor Certificate

Progress Diary

Week 2

End of week 2 and that's the flying training wrapped up, the remaining 11 hours in the air will be revising and practicing what I've been taught. It becoming more real now, the thought that in the not-too-distant future I'll be let loose with a student. I'm told that "Doris and Eric" will now become more devious in their ways to upset the aircraft so I need to be truly on guard!



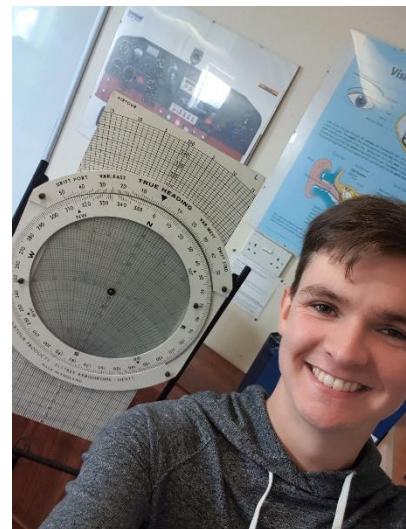
My flying and patter were definitely sharpening throughout the week, although exercises such as practice forced landings definitely require some practice to ensure that you can get all the required words out as you are descending towards the ground.

Although the weather has been less kind this week, we've successfully completed precautionary landings in the circuit at Leicester and some low-level navigation to Tatenhill and back. I've particularly enjoyed the more relaxed navigational flying, where the planning and patter happens on the ground and there is time to lookout and fly. It has also given me an opportunity to dust off my flight computer and try to teach (read: remember) how to use it. Successfully completing a NavEx without the crutch of Skydemon attached to a panel has been really refreshing. I can remember how to do it!

My pre-flight brief practice is going well, we've started off easy with a projector and slides to find my feet and make sure I am saying the right words but "Doris and Eric" do still seem to be able to find questions that I just can't quite articulate a clear answer to. More revision is still required. Next week we'll have to start getting used to operating without the digital aids. We'll just be left with a whiteboard and a few coloured pens.

My theoretical knowledge is being tested throughout and although my answers are sharper my ability to draw diagrams on the whiteboard will still needs work. However, I'm more confident in standing up and just having a go.

In summary, my comfort in the right-hand seat has definitely improved along with my ability to land the 152 on the centreline. My patter is getting better and my confidence in standing up and trying to explain concepts and pre-flight briefs is improving. With the flying exercises completed now, I'm now expected to just get on with the patter and demo. It won't be too long until the assessment of competence comes around.



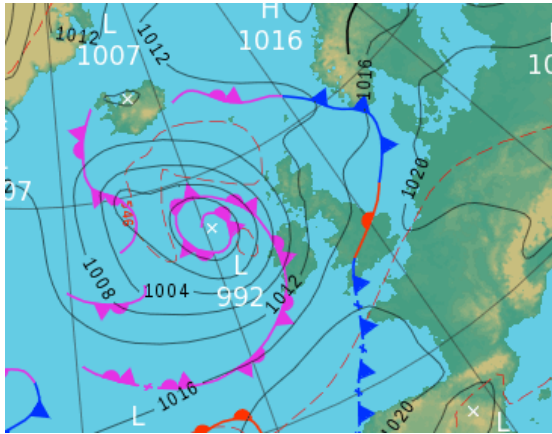
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Progress Diary

Week 3

Revision for the Assessment of Competence is in full swing! I'm having to remember, patter, demonstrate, teach, and critique about 5 different exercises per flight with "Doris or Eric". I'm exhausted by the end of each sortie. Not only that but on almost every flight the engine mysteriously fails or the flaps won't deploy and I have to patter out emergency procedures too.



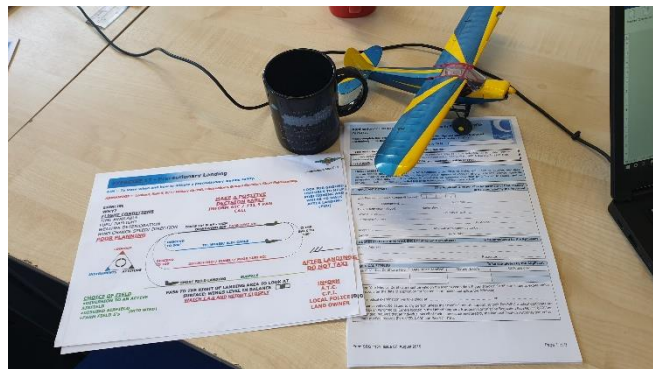
Weather has certainly not stopped us getting into the air, we've just had to pick our moments between the rain showers and some imagination has been required to see the horizon for reference. I've certainly expanded my own weather envelope and seen when it is probably not a good idea to try to teach someone straight and level.

I've also had to ensure my flying has been accurate although with all the practice I am getting this is coming naturally. I've been reminded that its rather annoying to a student if you preach accuracy but don't keep to it yourself. The crosswinds have also got me working harder too, for the past couple of weeks it has permanently been "light and variable" so pattering and accurately flying a crosswind approach has been rather challenging. Handing control to "Doris or Eric" has been downright terrifying. I'm sure when I am out instructing "on the line" I will have plenty of opportunity to learn the judgement required near the ground.

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Back in the briefing room I've had to conduct pre-flight briefings with just a whiteboard and a few coloured pens. My drawing skills and confidence are really coming along. The occasional subject requires a short read of the book but all this practice really has sharpened my knowledge.

Next week (if the weather is kind) I could have it completed! I'm not feeling the pressure or nerves yet as my instruction here has been so thorough. I'm told the revision sorties are harder than the assessment itself but I'm still reserving my judgement. However, as a vote of confidence from my instructor, I've been handed an application form now to fill out in preparation for the assessment. Okay, maybe I am a little nervous!



Week 4

And that's a wrap! I can't quite believe it. The assessment of competence is done and all I have to show for it is a temporary certificate, wadge of paperwork for the CAA and a huge sense of pride.

This final week was all revision. "Doris and Eric" were being particularly devious but the great training I've received has really helped me. Every now and then I fumble my words but my articulation and explanations have significantly improved with practice. I'm also amazed with how my flying skills have improved with the intense amount of flying that I have been doing. The right-hand seat has also become very comfortable – such a difference from just 4 weeks ago!

Safety & Airspace Regulation Group
Flight Operations: Training Standards & Policy Group



During the week I finalised and practiced my long brief, brushed up on my theoretical knowledge with Standards Document 10 and knew what exercise I planned to teach for the assessment. I was about as ready as I could be.

Standards Document 10 (Aeroplanes) Version 8

Guidance for:

- Instructors
- Instructor trainers
- Flight Instructor Examiners (FIE)

I had been looking at the weather all week for the day we had planned to do the assessment. The morning was looking good with the wind picking up in the afternoon. My assessment began with my long brief about bolt locking methods, the engineer and comedian inside me deciding that the title "Holding onto my Nuts" was appropriate. This was followed by my short brief with the chosen subject of "Exercise 9: Turning". An hour later I was collecting keys for the aircraft and looking at how much windier it had become.

Holding on
to my nuts

What keeps them on?



John, my examiner put me at ease and the flight was almost anticlimactic. The training I had received prepared me very well for the assessment and compared to the revision sorties, where I was teaching multiple exercises, the whole event was far more relaxed. My taught exercise had gone well and my PFL demonstration and steep turns were satisfactory, it was just back to the airfield for a few different circuits. The strong gusty winds made this the hardest part of the flight, requiring a go around when we encountered some significant rotor on short final. A command decision was made to make the next approach our last and head in for tea and medals. Jokingly I was told if we don't divert you'll pass!



Huge thanks must go to John and Peter at Leicester along with all the team there for making me welcome, the Honourable Company and the Swire Educational Trust for footing the bill! Also, to Lee Ingram of Motorglide for the encouragement and teaching me to fly, Jeremy Pratt of AFE for all my books and, of course, my parents for their enduring support and listening to my practice briefings the past weeks.

