



## ALEX ACHIEVES AIRLINE DREAM

**Stapleford's first graduate from the integrated training programme, Alex Harris, achieved his ATPL in a record 16-months and, when he finished, he immediately passed the selection process and is now following in the footsteps of his father, Mike Harris, taking up a job with Titan Airways**

For 20-year-old Alex becoming an airline pilot with Titan is "a dream come true. Since the age of one I wanted to be a pilot like my Dad." When he came to Stapleford, as one of the first students on the newly-established Jetway Integrated Training course, he did have a flying start.

Alex started with gliding lessons at the age of 11, and by the time he was 17 he was the youngest ever-instructor at Essex Gliding Club, where he subsequently became Deputy CFI and an examiner. He is also a glider aerobatic champion. He will continue with his gliding "for fun", but the intention was always to be an airline pilot.

"My gliding experience helped a lot. When I started on the integrated course at Stapleford, I already knew how to fly, so I could concentrate on the power specific aspects. Gliding certainly enhances your hand flying skills.

"I would fully recommend Stapleford's integrated course. I think it produces a thoroughly professional pilot, and that is what the airlines are looking for. There are other advantages to the modular route though, as it does allow for broader experience.

"For me, being on a full-time course, I felt I was being properly nurtured. You are working at it every day and mostly with the same instructor. I was so fortunate in having Anneli Christian-Phillips as my instructor right through to my CPL, and then having Jon Onsloe and Chris Savva for my IR. That is a very difficult rating, but I thoroughly enjoyed it."

He acknowledges that the ATPL Theoretical Knowledge course is hard, and it is easy to get discouraged. "I want to go back to Stapleford to meet up with the students now on the course to share my experiences and give them some encouragement to stick at it."

Alex was also getting lots of support from his Dad, Mike, who has now retired as a senior Captain with

Titan and is instructing on the Multi-Crew course at Stapleford. "But he always allowed me to carve my own way".



ALEX HARRIS IN THE RIGHT-HAND SEAT OF A B737-300

His own career path is onwards and upwards, and Alex has now completed his type rating and his line training on the Boeing 737-300 and is thoroughly enjoying flying as a First Officer to lots of interesting places.

Head of Training, Colin Dobney, comments: "I'm very pleased for Alex. He was a model student throughout his time with us and, as well as appreciating his natural flying skills, it was satisfying to witness his development from enthusiastic boy into a well-rounded, personable and capable young man, who I'm sure will have a long and successful career in aviation.

"It is especially pleasing too that he chose to fly for Titan Airways. SFC has for many years had a steady stream of our graduates being taken on by them, many of whom have risen through the ranks and now hold management pilot positions within the company."

## SUCCESS STORIES

Congratulations to all students who have flown their first solo and to those who have recently achieved their PPL. Wishing them all the best for their future flying.

**First Solo:** Michael Aikenhead, Ashton Baker, Florian Bouygues, Stefan Gavrilas, Simba Gurira, James Harper, Andrew Hill, Maxime Roux, Michael Smith, Jamie Speller, Isabelle Stead, Travis Tang.

**Skills Test:** Adam Atchia, Diana Franculescu, Anna Grebenyuk, Norris Ho, Joshua Holby-Knight, Hidetoshi Kamiya, Servet Kurt, Kenneth Martlew, Mehdi Malekmohammadi, Andrei-Sorin Moldovan, Chandra Nauth-Misir, Barry Newlyn, Anett Novak, Muammar Rubyae, Zain Said, Bradley Short, Adam Toms, Vivian Yuen.

## PASSING THE SKILLS TEST

**New PPL, Mehdi Malekmohammadi, reflects on his recent experience of the PPL Skills Test:**

I recently passed my skills test with the indomitable Alan Turner. I'm one of those people lucky enough to be given a trial flying lesson as a birthday present. That was back in 2012. Before then, I had no idea you could just rock up at a flight school and learn to fly privately. I always thought you had to join an airline or the military.

My trial lesson was in a C152 which, though enjoyable, was a tight fit for my 6ft 1in self. I was introduced to the roomier Piper Warrior, which I have flown ever since. I was immediately hooked after my trial lesson and I wanted to learn how to do it properly. It's an incredible privilege to be a pilot whizzing around in the sky, seeing things from a perspective that few people regularly enjoy.



MEHDI ACHIEVES HIS PPL IN G-SACI

Due to having a day job, flying has been a slow burner project for the last few years. After some encouragement from the wife last year, I decided I was ready to put in some hard work to get my licence.

My amazing instructor, Sue Royse, instilled rigour into my flying and gave me the confidence I needed to take my skills test. I had done a few practice tests with Sue

and she had talked me through my mistakes, and drilled me on what to expect. Therefore I felt ready to get it over with when I scheduled my skills test with Alan

My three top tips for anyone about to take the test:

- Be mentally prepared - know what to expect; jot down all radio frequencies in the vicinity, as you will be asked to divert
- Know your aircraft – the examiner will ask you questions about what bit of the plane does what
- Rest well the night before – it's gonna be a long day...

Very soon after I completed my skills test, I joined a Stapleford fly-out to Rouen and got my cross-channel check. I was also lucky enough to complete my night rating during my PPL training. Next up is to build enough pilot-in-command hours so I can do my Instrument Rating. It may sound like chasing ratings, but I know it will come in very handy in this cloud-friendly part of the world!

I don't have any plans to go down the commercial route as I feel a bit old at 34 to be switching careers. I'm going to make full use of my PPL to share the joy of flying with friends and family.

I am pleased to report that my wife, Audrey, has taken up flying lessons, training with none other than Sue and I am optimistic that we'll soon be drawing lots for the left-hand seat.

As a hands-on guy, I love the practical part of flying, learning the controls and feeling how the aircraft responds. I'm having lots of fun working towards a point where flying will be second nature.

## CURRENCY CLARIFICATION

Stapleford's currency requirements for hiring a club aeroplane have been clarified. Under the new requirements a PPL Stapleford Flying Club member wishing to hire a Non-Complex SEP (Single engine piston) such as a PA28, C172, C152 or P2008 (Tecnam) aircraft will be considered current as long as they have:

- Been checked out by a Stapleford Instructor on it in the past and
- Flown any SEP Stapleford Club aircraft within 45 days (for those with less than 150 hours) or 62 days for those with more than 150 hours logged. Which type is not important.

For Complex aircraft such as the PA2R (Arrow), T67M (Firefly) PA34 (Seneca), or the PA 18 (Cub), pilots must have flown the type they are wishing to hire within the 45 or 62-day period. Pilots who have flown an aircraft from the Complex list you are considered current for any of the non-complex aircraft listed.

## PROJECT PROPELLER

**Stapleford pilots and aircraft owners, Fred Parkes and Keith Cullum describe their experiences as volunteers flying WW2 veterans:**

**Fred writes:** Back in 1999 I got to hear about some guys who were matching volunteer pilots with WW2 veterans, to fly them to a reunion. This became known as Project Propeller. I just had to get involved. This year was my 18th attendance. The venue was Gloucester (EGBJ – previously RAF Staverton).

Over the years I've had a real mix of veterans: a Mosquito pilot, a Liberator pilot, a Spitfire pilot, and a Lancaster navigator. All had wonderful but scary stories. This year I had my long-standing veteran, Warrant Officer Harry Irons DFC and a veteran from the First Gulf War, Flight Lieutenant John Nichol.

Harry Irons signed up at the age of 16 in 1940 and flew his first mission at 18. He started as a Lancaster rear gunner and then moved on to Halifax bombers. He did two full tours of duty, each 30 sorties. To his knowledge he is the only one to achieve 60 missions without getting injured.

John Nichol, on the other hand, was shot down in his Tornado on the first low level daylight raid over Iraq in January 1991. He was captured, imprisoned and tortured. John remained in the RAF for another five years after his release, and served in Bosnia. He is now a best-selling author – a mix of fact and fiction but all aviation.

It has been a real privilege to get to know these people. I just hope and pray these guys remain fit enough to board my Commander for a few years yet.

**Keith Cullum writes:** I was introduced to Project Propeller by Fred Parkes around 15 years ago. I had always had a keen interest in the RAF and its veterans partly because my own father was an armourer during WW2.

I used our Robin HR100/210 (G-BLWF) for the first events I attended and now use our Cirrus SR22 (N89GH) since we acquired this in 2010. I am joined by one of the other owners, Graham Kilby, to assist with the veterans.

The most recent veterans I have flown, for a few years now, are Jim McGillivray and Frank Elliott, both now well into their 90s. Jim was a Lancaster rear gunner and is always ready with stories and pictures. Frank is a relative newcomer only finding out about Project Propeller when he attended RAF Aircrew events after his wife died.

Frank was an Observer/Navigator and from the various stories and banter amongst the veterans these guys seemed to be the butt of many jokes when finding their way around the skies of Europe with no nav-aids to assist, mainly dead reckoning at



night with the crew pointing out notable landmarks in the moonlight! This year Frank was accompanied by his son, himself a retired RAF ground crew with many years' service.

Gloucester Airport, along with the Project Propeller organisers, put on one of the best-ever organised events. The local ATC boys and girls were everywhere to assist with drinks orders, delivering plates of food and helping the veterans where necessary.

The BBMF (Battle of Britain Memorial Flight) Hurricane made a number of passes by the event tents before landing and taxiing not far from our "flightline". Even after all these years the veterans were most impressed to see the Hurricane.

The energy and attitude shown by these veterans to get in and out of all sorts of aircraft to attend these events is wonderful and I know I speak for all the volunteer pilots that it is a privilege to spend time with these extraordinary people.

Roll on 2018 when the event will be held at Halfpenny Green on Sunday, 17th June.

## FROM THE RIGHT-HAND SEAT

**Turning is the focus of Roy Copperwaite's article giving advice to pilots:**

The subject for discussion this time is turning. Turning? I hear you ask. Who can't turn an aircraft? But this is a discussion that has been arising more and more amongst instructors, mainly after a club check or bi-annual check.

The problems we see are:

1. Starting the turn with a climb or descent registering on the VSI
2. Pulling and turning or turning and pulling too hard, too early
3. Moving the controls piecemeal and taking too long to reach the desired AOB (angle of bank).

So how is it done?

Firstly, of course, lookout! This is started from the

opposite direction of turn, up and down the horizon until you are in the direction of the turn you wish to make. Check you are not in a climb or descent. Then just move the control column with light rudder pressure to balance until the desired AOB is registering on the AI

Note: More than 30 degrees, add power. 200 rpm should do.

Set the aircraft attitude at a point on the horizon. Back pressure is now required. Check the VSI, using any part of the cowling or dash. Use a screw or anything you can to fix against the horizon. Continue with frequent lookouts but always come back to the attitude and adjust as necessary.

Scan using look-out – attitude – instruments (LAI). Practice makes Perfect!



THE GROUP OF ATPL STUDENTS WHO HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THEIR THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE COURSE AT STAPLEFORD: PHOTO: ADRIAN OLIVER

## FLY-OUTS SPREADING THEIR WINGS

**Stapleford fly-outs this year just got ever bigger and better, with a spectacular overnighter in Guernsey and even farther flung destinations to come. Take Off Editor, Sue Rose reports:**

A highlight of Stapleford's ever-popular fly-outs this year was a trip to Guernsey in July for 12 of us pilots. The extra time afforded by the overnight stay enabled all five crews time to take scenic routes, either along the French coast and overhead the Normandy beaches, or down to La Rochelle for a lunch stop and back along the coast north to Guernsey.

The weather proved near perfect, enabling the fly-outers, led by instructors, Steve Evans and James Lee, to log some serious flying time, and to make the most of Channel Island hospitality. We could not have had better service from Guernsey Airport handling, who took very good care of us and our aeroplanes.

For those who took the shorter route there was plenty of time to sample the delights of St Peter Port, the seafood and, for two of us, a swim in the hotel's outdoor pool.



NOIRMOUTIER-EN-L'ILE, EN ROUTE FROM LA ROCHELLE TO GUERNSEY: PHOTO: JAMES LEE

Our return journeys took us either via Goodwood, enabling close encounters with a Spitfire or further afield via Rouen in Normandy. Either way it was a thoroughly enjoyable and memorable flying experience for all of us, thanks to the meticulous planning and briefing from Steve and James.

By contrast, in June, fly-outers headed east to Kortrijk in Belgium, close to Ypres, the Menin Gate and the WW1 battlefields. We visited the historic town centre, a short taxi ride from the airport and lunched in the market square in the sunshine.

Spreading wings even further afield there are plans for a 3-day trip to the Scottish Highlands from 26 – 28 August, with an estimated total flying time over the three days of 20 – 24 hours (10 – 12 for each pilot). This will be followed by a two-day Scottish trip on 12 and 13 September, with an estimated flying time of 12 -16 hours.

While both Scottish trips are open to private owners to join, places for club members will be limited to six pilots on each trip and due to the nature of flying in Scotland, and the small landing strips, it is highly recommended to take an instructor. For further information go to: [www.evansabove.us/scotland-aug17.php](http://www.evansabove.us/scotland-aug17.php) or [www.evansabove.us/scotland-sept17.php](http://www.evansabove.us/scotland-sept17.php)

## DISCOUNT FOR STAPLEFORD PILOTS

RunwayHD is a sophisticated App that runs on Apple and Android mobile devices. It provides navigation planning and tracking functions including CAA charts, NOTAMs and airspace warnings.

RunwayHD is provided by Airbox, who are offering Stapleford pilots the opportunity to purchase the software at 20% discount by quoting code STAPLE. For further information and a free 30-day trial go to [www.airboxaero.com](http://www.airboxaero.com)

TAKE OFF is edited by Sue Rose ([suerose.pr@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:suerose.pr@hotmail.co.uk)) and designed by John Pasche. Please do send us your stories, your photos and your ideas.

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