

# East Staffs Flying Club



Newsletter

Christmas 2009

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## Chairman's Report

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Although this is the 'late' Christmas version of the newsletter I would like to wish all ESFC members a very happy and safe New Year!

Due to the cold weather we have had a couple of problems in the clubhouse due to the pipes bursting and flooding the cabin. Brian Hall has placed a sign asking that whilst this cold weather continues please ensure that the cold water tap in the kitchen under the sink is turned off. Please respect this requirement and this will ensure that we do not have another indoor skating rink! I would like to thank Marin Handley for sorting out the last problem by managing to turn off the water, but this has still left Brian Hall with a significant amount of work to make good the damage.

Don't forget the talk by Polly Vacher on 26<sup>th</sup> January. A remarkable lady and should be an excellent evening. Thanks go to Jan Miller-Craig for inviting ESFC members to this event.

The ESFC AGM will be held in March, so if you would like to have some say in the future operation of the club please attend. We will also be asking if anyone would like to become a committee member so you have been warned!

Membership renewal is due 1<sup>st</sup> February, the committee would hope that all members will want to renew. Look out for the email with details on how to renew your membership.

Mike Tidmarsh

## Recent Achievements

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Mulk Raj passed his Navigation Flight Test on Thursday the 1st of October. On Saturday the 24th of October he passed his General Flight Test. Hopefully he should have a licence by the time that the newsletter comes out.  
Congratulations!

Jessica Sparkes passed her PPL Skills Test on Friday the 9th of October. Well done.



Scott Cameron passed his PPL Skills Test on Sunday the 18th of October. Well done.

Michael Lewis passed his NFT on Friday the 20th of November. Well done.

Dave Stonebridge went off on his first solo flight on Tuesday 22nd December.

## Talk To Me

I've got a funny feeling that lots of our pilots fail to check NOTAMS before they go flying. I may be wrong. Even if you're going on a local flight it's still important to check. For example, how many of you know that the SWB VOR/DME has been out of service for the past month or so?

I've had the chance to spend some time playing with the AIS / NOTAM website during the recent bad weather. Once you get the hang of it is very easy to use. If you have any questions, and you see me stuck on the ground because of bad weather, then please feel free to come and ask me to show you how to use the site.

Martin Handley.

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## The NPPL - A Personal View.

I started to learn to fly in 1995. My first flight was a trial from Derby with Keith Underhill as my instructor and I was so taken with it that we actually called back to the field to arrange my next flight while we were still in the air!

I followed the usual CAA PPL course available at the time and was getting towards first solo when I was told I should get my medical. So, off I went to Castle Donington where I was duly processed and told that I seemed to be quite fit, but - I couldn't have a medical certificate. I had had a heart attack and well, to cut a long story short, the restricted version of the license had been withdrawn in preparation for the introduction of the JAR PPL, so there was no way I was going to get that certificate without many thousands of pounds spent on exploratory procedures - and possibly not even then!

I rather dejectedly returned to the airfield with the news, thinking that this would be the last I saw of any flying.

Andy Simmons, the CFI, had other ideas, though! He suggested that firstly I worked on my radio and got an RT license and then changes were made to my



flying training - I was to work at becoming a "buddy pilot". At first, we continued with the dreaded circuits - never boring and often terror-filled at Derby (the hedge, the trees, the lack of runway, the mud, er.... alligators?) - before moving on to navigation.

My introduction to this skill came as something of a shock! For most people, their first "navex" consisted of little more than flying a few miles from the field with a straight-forward return. Mine consisted of an outward leg from Church Broughton to Wheaton Aston, then through Birmingham zone (including the radio calls) to overhead Nuneaton, making two diversions round large snow clouds on the way and then returning to Church Broughton except that, halfway back, over another airfield called Tatenhill, I was told to divert directly to Uttoxeter before going home!

Although I had only owned any navigation kit for a week, I was expected to have read the book, worked out how to plot the route and then fly it! To my (and my instructor's) amazement, I did it without managing to get myself lost, although I fully admit I wasn't necessarily all that close to my plot line at times. I knew - just about - where I was, even if it wasn't quite where I should have been!

Along with more navigation exercises, I did the 4 hours of instrument appreciation before the fun started! This was before radio navigation was introduced into the PPL syllabus, but it was decided that I would be of more help to my pilot-of-the-day if I could do this as well and so, the AOPA Radnav course was introduced into my special never-ending buddy syllabus! After a while, I found that I was doing exercises in IMC as well. Although I did them, holds and formal joins were made secondary while I concentrated on procedures such as SRAs and vectored ILS approaches, which would be of more use in an emergency.

My navigation trips became more interesting as I found myself doing 1 or even 2 hour trips totally in IMC as well as many unplanned diversions. I also spent all my time in the right hand seat learning how to do everything from there - it really is quite different! Hardly what I had expected some months before when my medical was first refused.

For all this time, I had consoled myself with the thought that at least I could keep flying - even though I couldn't get that precious license. From then until mid 2002, I put in quite a few hours flying with low hours PPLs as an "experienced passenger" although my only formal qualification was as a licensed radio operator.

So what has all this to do with the NPPL? Well, to all intents and purposes, it is the re-introduction of the old CAA restricted PPL, which meant that I could at



last get a medical certificate (now called a Declaration of Medical Fitness to Fly) and hopefully complete the course for my license. So, back I went to the left hand seat and the rest, as they say, is history. I received my NPPL in January 2003.

How does the NPPL differ from the JAR license? Well, it is certainly more restrictive. Amongst other things, you cannot fly the Antonov AN2, it's too heavy! There are no additional ratings, such as Night or IMC - at least for the moment - although you can still get a range of difference training certified; tricycle, tail-dragger, wobbly prop, diesel, retractable undercarriage, turbo and so forth. I got my wobbly prop difference certification in May of 2003 and another five along the way.

You cannot be PIC outside the UK FIR with an NPPL, although there is nothing to stop you from teaming up with a JAR license holder if you want an occasional trip to France, Ireland etc.. But, remember: You can't log P1 while you are outside the UK FIR.

The positive features? The most obvious one is the medical requirement. Up to your 45th birthday, there is no renewal after the initial Declaration. From 45 to 65 it is every 5 years and only after 65 does this reduce to every year. The Declaration is issued by your own GP and not by a CAA approved doctor, as would be the case with the JAR PPL. The charge varies from GP to GP; the lowest I have heard of so far is actually nothing (£0!) although one un-named individual has already tried to rip pilots off for £100 (he must be CAA trained!) - just to sign your Declaration. Your GP doesn't even have to do a formal medical on you, as he will know your general fitness state in any case.

Also, the NPPL, along with its associated RT license, is granted for life. There is no renewal requirement - other than the usual bi-annual re-validation.

Unlike the minimum 45 hours the CAA insist upon to gain the JAR license, the NPPL has a minimum qualification time of only 32 hours - but there is no Radnav component. However, before you plump for the NPPL solely on this basis, ask yourself how many students manage the JAR version in as little as 45 hours! The actual number of flying hours required to reach an adequate level of training is just about the same.

At the moment, the written exams for the NPPL are the same ones used for the JAR PPL. This is slightly ridiculous, for example, in the Navigation exam, where there are several questions on Radnav - even though it isn't part of the NPPL course! Hopefully this will change when a discrete set of NPPL exam papers becomes available in due time.



Can you upgrade from an NPPL to a JAR PPL if you change your mind before or after qualifying? Yes! It only requires that you have the correct medical and that you do any additional number of hours training with your instructor and have passed the requisite flight test.

Can you downgrade easily from a JAR PPL to an NPPL if you are not going to fly regularly overseas, don't have or don't want additional ratings and don't want the continuing expense of the JAR medical? Yes again! All you have to do is fill in the NPPL application form and pay the one-off application fee - your existing JAR medical is accepted for the NPPL. When it becomes due for renewal, simply go to your own GP for an NPPL Medical Declaration Form instead.

You may even fly on an NPPL Declaration with a JAR license immediately provided you stick to the NPPL rules.

So far (2009), I haven't seen any discrimination by aircraft owners in hiring out their aircraft to NPPL holders as against CAA or JAR PPL holders.

What is the revalidation procedure? Unlike the JAR PPL, which has no demand in the first of two years followed by a minimum twelve hours in the second, the NPPL requirement is much more sensible: 6 hours minimum per year, every year, with at least 4 hours as PIC and containing a minimum of one contiguous hour with an instructor at any time within each 2 year period - or a General Skills Test within 3 months of expiry.

After 450 hours I'm still thoroughly enjoying my flying as an NPPL. It may be the "next best" option but it still beats sitting on the ground any day!

Which license would I recommend? The JAR PPL or the NPPL? My answer is that they both have their advantages and disadvantages and you must make your own choice as to which suits your requirements best. For me, it can only be the NPPL, but it will depend entirely on your personal circumstances. Why not talk to an instructor to get their expert opinion on your own situation?

John McLinden



## SOCIAL EVENTS

### CLUB NIGHT - 26 January 2010

#### Talk by Polly Vacher

President of the Derby Medical Society (and ESFC member), Jan Millar Craig offers a very warm welcome to all ESFC members to a talk by Polly Vacher (see attached poster for more details). Polly will talk about her round the world flights which will make for a very memorable evening. The evening will commence at 19:30 at the Derby City Hospital (Royal Derby Hospital).

### CLUB NIGHT - 25 February 2010

TBC

### CLUB NIGHT - March 2010

The ESFC A.G.M which will be held at the Albion Hotel, Shobnall Road, Burton on Trent.

## OTHER EVENTS

If you have any suggestions for other events or would like to help, please contact Jon Faulkner at [esfc2007@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:esfc2007@hotmail.co.uk)

Please keep an eye on the club notice board and the website ([www.esfc.org.uk](http://www.esfc.org.uk)) for more regular updates on forthcoming events

## NEXT MEDICAL DUE?

As a reminder Dr Hill, our local AME, continues to give a discretionary £5 discount on aviation medical examinations to East Staffs Flying club members. To receive the discount you must show your current ESFC membership card at the time of your medical.

Contact details for Dr Hill are as follows:

Dr J D Hill AME  
Burton upon Trent  
01283 730201

## NEWSLETTER

If you have any articles for the newsletter or comments on the format, please contact Alison at [alie\\_todd@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:alie_todd@yahoo.co.uk).