

The Trials and Tribulations of a Student Pilot

It's true, yes, you want to fly, you know you do.

Why else did you turn up for that "trial flight". Perhaps just to see if you could fly in a tube with wings, a Small Tube with wings at that; unlike the Big Tube you normally fly in!

Mad..... I should turn back now, and not get out of the car, but there is something burning away inside.

Mmmm... I wonder what it's like.

One hour later 'Yes, Yes, Yes - Can I start now'. I've found out what's been burning away. Ye ha - I am going to do this.

Stage One - check your bank balance, then check it again, then forget about it, you're already hooked!

Now that the worrying part is over, here we Go.

Everyone has their own motivations for doing this.

Mine is the challenge of doing something that is hard, and not easy. After years of work, you sometimes just need to feel alive again, and that's what flying does. It makes you look at yourself.

Not in front of everyone, but in the reflective parts of your day or night, when you look back at your lesson and say - Wow that was really challenging. When you find out that you were really in control of your actions.

You dream about it, you run through parts of your flight in your head, you even look outside! - You all know what I mean.

So, my first real flight. I am glad my instructor is in that right hand seat! So much to remember - buttons, dials, the steering wheel oh, that's not the Steering wheel oh joy.

Pre-flight

I have looked at everything from the static port to the drill holes on the wings ... really, drill holes on the wings?. It must have taken me 40 minutes to pre flight, but you knew that it was for real, and it does work.

Some weeks later I am doing my pre flight. You know you are in the "Zone" and must not be distracted. It is the same routine over and over, but when I try the stall horn - nothing!

Mm.. I put my finger over the outlet again. stick the tube in, and remember to "suck not blow". Nothing.

I must be doing something wrong, so try again - still nothing.

Ok let's complete the pre flight and wait until the instructor joins me.

I say nothing at this point and the instructor does the Fuel and Oil. Then I say, 'can you check the Stall horn?'.
He tries. Nothing.

'Ah', I say 'try sucking' (smart comment). Nothing
He walks off to find someone. The new 'someone' has a go. Nothing!
'Ok - so what now - we must be able to fly (this is what I am thinking at this point).
The instructor ask me to find the POH.
'Ok - why' I ask 'Look to see what it says about failed Stall Horns'
'What's this all about' (I think again to myself) 'it's just a small reed' then Boom... The
aircraft is grounded.
It is a requirement. What you find in the POH is truly amazing.

The point of this small and affective lesson was 'don't take it for granted that the person
before you did the right thing'.
Always check! No matter how small the fault. It can develop into something bigger and
just when you least expect it!

So I decided to fly as often as I could, Twice per day and three times per week so RHV
[Reid-Hillview Airport] is fast becoming my second home. I guess that is why they are
building (bed)rooms above us!

Radio's

OK - this is going to be fun, I read the scripts over and over, I chair fly over and over.
It's easy, this chair flying and radio work.
Today I went from RHV to Shanghai in a C172. This flying is so easy!

Now for the real thing.

So I am all fired up. Pre flight done. Push back. Check List, Engine start more checks
and we are rolling, Radio frequency set to ground

I can do this. I am in command here, then just think back to the script.

'Reid Hill View Ground ... ' but nothing else is coming out of my mouth.

Then I remember 'Five Two Nine Zero Echo', erm is that right? - but should it be 'niner',
but what the heck!

Back to the radio 'Behind Tradewinds with ... ' Oh no, not again, it is someone's name
but I can't remember. Then out comes this name - Mike,

Now that's a worry. I had no idea why I should be behind Tradewinds with Mike, (Now, if
it was with Juliet, it would be quite a different matter ...) Ah Yes, Mike and Juliet are the
phonetic alphabet. My instructor takes over the radio and makes the call!.

So I start to taxi out. I would not call it taxi, more of a dance. The taxi way does have a
line on it, so it's just like line dancing! Or side stepping.

I can't control the thing on the ground , never mind up in the sky.

I think this flying is a bad idea. Anyway we make it to the run up area and starting more
check lists. And I'm not even on the runway yet.....

Over the course of a number of weeks all these things sort themselves out, and, with
the encouragement of my instructor, it became easier. But it's not easy, which is
always a good sign. Just to keep you sharp.

In my next installment, I take off, did something called Air work and yes, what go's up must come down
Thanks for reading my Ramblings.

Enjoy your flying and happy landings.

Gordon Bennie