Club History

Almat Flying Club was established in 1974 and since then has been conducting training for the Private Pilots Licence (PPL) and associated Ratings. In August 2007 the club moved into modern premises in Anson House in the General Aviation terminal at Coventry Airport (EGBE). These offer very modern and comfortable facilities to pilots, visitors and accompanying family members.

The club offers flight training for the Joint Aviation Authority (JAA) PPL. The JAA is the aviation equivalent of the European Union, and is a “club” of the different European aviation authorities who have agreed common European aviation training standards. Licences issued by a JAA state are valid across all other JAA member states. In the UK the JAA system is administered by the United Kingdom Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

A flying Licence must be issued with at least one Rating. The PPL is usually issued with a Single Engine Piston (SEP) Rating. This entitles you to “fly a single engine light aircraft in Visual Flight Rules (VFR) outside of Class A airspace”. Decoded, this means you can fly over most of the country outside of (or below) the Airways (where commercial aircraft fly) provided that the weather is within certain limits of visibility. To fly in bad weather, at night or in a twin-engine aircraft requires further training and Ratings. You may not fly for hire or reward using a PPL (to do so requires a Commercial Pilots Licence). However, up to four people may equally share the cost of a private flight.

1) Flying Training

Flight training is conducted in the club two seat aircraft (Cessna 150 or Cessna 152), or on our four seat aircraft (Cessna 172 or Piper PA28). Training takes place 7 days a week from 1000 to 1800 (1600 over the Winter). Each lesson has a two hour slot to allow for a pre-flight briefing and preparation, an hour flying, and time to de-brief the lesson and discuss any points or queries that may have arisen.

The debrief will enable you to gain maximum benefit from your time in the air - you can frequently learn as much from your mistakes as you can from getting it right first time! Navigation flights may require the booking of double slots, but students should not plan to fly more than two lessons per day. It is advisable to set aside a morning or an afternoon for a two hour lesson. Trying to squeeze it in to a busy schedule does not work for either side if there are any delays to weather etc.
The CAA requires all candidates to complete a minimum of 45 hours flight training. This includes:

- **25 hours** dual flying with a flying instructor
- **10 hours** solo, including:
  - At least **5 hours** cross country navigation, which itself must include:
  - a **Qualifying Cross Country** flight of 150 miles landing away at two other aerodromes.

The remaining 10 hours will be dual or solo, depending on the needs of the student (usually dual).

Your PPL course will progress as follows:

**Stage 1**
Consists of 5-10 hours in which we teach you to fly the aircraft straight and level, to climb, descend and turn, together with the basic skills to control the speed and rate of climb and descent. You will develop the skills required to complete all the pre-flight checks and be able to taxi, take off and make basic radio calls with confidence. In addition you will learn to look out, perform safety checks as you fly and to generally be at home in your new environment.

**Stage 2**
The Circuit, basically a rectangular pattern flown around Coventry airfield, consists of take off, climb, turn, level off, turn, level flight, turn, descent, approach and landing. By now you will have 15 to 20 hours flying experience and you should be able to fly the Circuit solo. Before you go first solo you will have covered all types of landings and demonstrated your competence to deal with any emergency situation that you could encounter.

**Stage 3**
After solo we consolidate what you have learned to date and introduce you to Practice Forced Landings, which will enable you to glide to a safe landing, should you lose engine power. This will prepare you for more solo work away from the circuit and enable us to progress to Stage 4.

**Stage 4**
Is all about Cross-Country Navigation including Radio Navigation - we will teach you to handle the workload of flying, navigating and communicating on the radio (all at the same time!). This stage is probably the most satisfying and leads to a solo **Qualifying Cross-Country Flight**.

**Stage 5**
Consists of some basic Instrument Flying, which covers the skills you will need to find your way out of cloud safely should you encounter it.

**Stage 6**
Is the preparation for your **Flying Skills Test**. This is the final 2.5 hour long flying test conducted by a Flying Instructor who has an Examiner Rating. It will consist of Navigation and General Handling.
2) Theoretical Knowledge Examinations

Just as we now have a Driving Theory Test, so we also have Theoretical Knowledge exams for the PPL. These test your understanding of all essential knowledge required for you to be a proficient and safe pilot.

Do not be put off if is some time since you studied. You do not need a technical or academic background to pass the exams. All the questions are multiple-choice, so the skills required are entirely practical: the ability to read, draw lines on a chart, and make simple calculations. You only need to set aside a couple of hours a week to study, or an evening per week for ground school, and have a keen interest to learn. We have listed the exams below. The time allowed for each one is generous. The CAA want to know if you have thoroughly learned essential aviation knowledge – it is not a form of timed selection test. There is also a Radio Telephony Practical Examination, which is a test taken on the ground, making all the radio calls that are required on a simulated flight.

Most students enjoy the challenge of learning something new!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam Subject</th>
<th>Number of questions</th>
<th>Time allowed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Aviation Law and Operational Procedures</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Aircraft General Knowledge and Principles of Flight</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1 hr 30 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Flight Performance and Planning</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Human Performance and Limitations</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Meteorology</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Navigation and Radio Aids</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1 hr 30 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Radio Communications</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Theoretical Knowledge exams can be passed by a by self study using textbooks. Each textbook covers one or two subjects, and there a number of providers to chose from - Pooleys, Air Pilot Manuals (Trevor Thom), etc. Some are more detailed than others, so choose the book for each subject that suits you and ask your instructor for advice. Each books costs from £12 to £30. Pictured below is a selection of the books we recommend for each subject:
3) Ground School Classes

We strongly recommend our ground school classes, run on **weekday evenings and at weekends**. These are taught by Richard Bellaby, one of our part-time Flying Instructors. These have between a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 10 students per class, and generally run on a Tuesday from 7:30 PM to 9:45 PM, including a 15 minute break. Sat / Sunday courses run from 10:00 am to 4:30 PM. The cost ranges between £55 per person for a 4 week course and £95 for a 7 week course (*note* this is the **total cost for the course**, not per session).

This is ideal for those who have not studied for a long period of time or find it difficult to assimilate the material from books. Some background reading is required, but much of the unnecessary text is bypassed and any question topics can be quickly resolved. **The CAA recommends at least 45 hours of ground school teaching** so Almat has a clear advantage over most schools, which have self-study as the only option available. It is also a good way to meet your fellow students at the club. All textbooks are available in our adjoining Transair pilot supplies shop. For the latest information on ground studies please follow the link: [www.almat.co.uk/ground_school.htm](http://www.almat.co.uk/ground_school.htm)

Theoretical Knowledge examinations are taken at Almat by Richard Bellaby, who is a Ground Examiner. The fee for each exam is £15. The exam can be taken at any time the club is open, with the Ground Examiner marking the paper at weekends.

*Note* – you do not have to join Almat as a member to attend our ground school. It is open to members of any other flying club.

Before you make your first solo flight we require you to pass the Aviation Law exam (exam 1). After passing your first Theoretical Knowledge examination you must pass the remainder within 18 months. You must pass all the Theoretical Knowledge examinations before you can take your Flying Skills Test.

4) Fitness and Medical

Prior to flying solo for the first time, **you must pass a medical examination by a CAA approved doctor**. The examination is similar to one you may be asked to undergo for life insurance purposes. Naturally eyesight is important but wearing spectacles or contact lenses does not normally prevent you from being a pilot. You will be issued with a JAA Class 2 Medical Certificate, which you must have before your first solo flight takes place. This is issued by a CAA approved Authorised Medical Examiner (AME). The CAA website contains a list of AMEs and can be accessed via the CAA website: [www.caa.co.uk](http://www.caa.co.uk). Look under “Safety Regulation Group”, then “Medical”.

5) Tests and Examinations - summary

In summary to qualify for the issue of a PPL the candidate will need to have passed the following requirements:

- Hold a valid Class 2 Medical certificate
- Passed all 7 Theoretical Knowledge examinations
- Have passed the Radio Telephony Practical examination
- Have flown at least 45 hours flight training, including 10 hours solo flying
- Have flown a Qualifying Cross Country flight
- Passed the Flying Skills Test
6) How long will it take?

The ability to acquire the necessary skills varies from one person to another but most people can reach the necessary level of proficiency with 45 to 60 hours of flight training. Training full time over four to six weeks (weather permitting) you would probably need less flying hours than if you spread training over a longer period. Be aware that a full time course will be a major commitment of 5 or 6 days a week.

If you can devote two mornings or afternoons each week (with a lesson each day) for flying with some studying in between you could gain your licence within three or four months. If you can only spare one day a week you could take as long as nine or ten months. However this more relaxed pace does allow plenty of time for study for the Theoretical Knowledge examinations.

Training is very much dependent upon the vagaries of the British weather. Low cloud, rain and drizzle, and poor visibility can lead to cancellations. It is not advisable to wait and restrict your flying to a particular season of the year. There can be heavy rain or hazy visibility on summer days while conversely many winter days can have cold but clear blue skies with excellent visibility and good aircraft availability.

It is important to try and maintain regular consistency. We appreciate that work commitments can intervene, but this may require some refresher training that inevitably adds to the hours required.

7) Booking lessons

This is by calling the club where the admin person or instructor on duty will book your lesson, or after completion of your lesson.

8) Budgeting and Flying Costs

This is the big question for most people! The Club currently has a selection of training aircraft. The hourly aircraft rates and club subscription fees are (correct in July 2008):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aircraft hire costs FULL membership</th>
<th>Training rate Per hour</th>
<th>Landing fee (not included in training rate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two seat (Cessna 150 or 152)</td>
<td>£106.15</td>
<td>£4.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four seat (Piper PA28 G-BAHF)</td>
<td>£131.15</td>
<td>£5.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four seat (Cessna 172 G-BOMS)</td>
<td>£140.15</td>
<td>£5.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subscription fees (annually)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>£240</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For those who only fly say once per month there is “Associate” membership where a smaller figure is paid annually but the hourly training rate is a little higher. If you are flying more than 1.5 hours per month it makes sense to go for “Full” membership.
Aircraft hire costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSOCIATE membership</th>
<th>Training rate Per hour</th>
<th>Landing fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two seat (Cessna 150 or 152)</td>
<td>£117.65</td>
<td>£4.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four seat (Piper PA28 G-BAHF)</td>
<td>£141.15</td>
<td>£5.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four seat (Cessna 172 G-BOMS)</td>
<td>£140.15</td>
<td>£5.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subscription fees (annually)

| Associate membership | £50 |

These rates include fuel, instructor and VAT. There are no other hidden costs. The rates are “chocks off to chocks on”, which is the time entered in your log book. The landing fee is charged by Coventry Airport and is beyond our control. Please check our website for latest information.

9) Equipment and other costs

The club has a selection of headsets for use by students. You will need to initially allow £25-30 for the purchase of a logbook to record flights plus an aeronautical map of Southern England. For the navigation phase of the course a Dalton computer (a navigation slide rule used for flight planning calculations) and plotting ruler and pencils will be required for which another £45-50 will be required.

The cost of the Flying Skills Test at the end of the course is £95, payable to the Examiner (plus the cost of the aircraft hire), and there is also the cost of Licence issue by the CAA.

No special clothing or shoes are required for flying, just comfortable clothing of the sort you would use to drive a car and a warm jacket in winter for walking out to the aircraft. For ladies, no high heels please. They make rudder control very difficult and will damage the wing surfaces when you board. The aircraft have very effective heating for winter use. For summer they are not air-conditioned but have effective cooling air vents.

It can be seen that a realistic budget for the complete Private Pilot’s Licence course is around £5,000. This could be spent on a new kitchen / second car / luxury cruise so please do discuss with your partner first! The big difference is that passing your PPL is a tremendous personal achievement, rather than the purchase of a consumer item which requires nothing more challenging than writing a cheque.

10) Flying Hours

If you start the course and then find that you have to temporarily stop due to work, family or other commitments, any flight time you have already logged will still count to your total required if you re-start at any time in the future. It is therefore very important that you keep your logbook in a safe place.
11) Further information – magazines and websites

- The two aviation glossy magazines you will see in WH Smiths are Pilot (www.pilotweb.co.uk) and Flyer (www.flyer.co.uk). They each publish an annual guide on learning to fly and have a host of useful information and articles on flying.

- A very informative website about his personal experience of learning to fly written by a newly qualified PPL student at Leeds Flying School gives a very useful overview of the PPL course and has many very useful links to other websites www.mydata.co.uk

- Almat Flying Club – our own website www.almat.co.uk

12) Trial lessons

Whether you are curious what it is like to pilot a light aircraft, or are considering a PPL but want to know if flying is for you, the trial lesson is the ideal place to start.

You will sit in the left-hand seat (the pilot-in-command seat), whilst your instructor will talk you through the flight. Your lesson starts with a briefing session where your Instructor will explain the controls of the aircraft and how they work which will prepare you to take control under supervision during your lesson.

During the flight you can take the controls and fly the aircraft, or take a more relaxed approach and see the sites around Warwickshire, take photographs and just enjoy the sensation of being in a light aircraft. It is followed by a short debrief after landing and your Instructor can answer any questions you may have about learning to fly. Sickness is very rare unless you are prone to travel sickness, and there is a small bag available if an emergency review of your latest catering intake be necessary.

The 30 minute trial lesson is a taster only – we recommend the one hour trial lesson so you can really be sure that flying is for you. If you have a spouse or parent who wishes to come along and see what you could be doing (or what they may be helping to pay for!) we can use a 4 seat aircraft. This means you can have two relatives or friends join you on your trial lesson.

The flight time logged during your Trial lesson will count towards the hours required for the issue of a PPL. Our trial lesson information booklet has a logbook entry section on it which will be completed by your instructor. Note – this is valid for use at any club (not just Almat) at any time in the future.

The cost of a Trial lesson is currently (July 2008):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aircraft Type</th>
<th>30 Minutes</th>
<th>45 Minutes</th>
<th>1 Hour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 seat</td>
<td>£55</td>
<td>£77.50</td>
<td>£100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 seat</td>
<td>£77.50</td>
<td>£113.75</td>
<td>£140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13) And finally… what sort of people learn to fly – is it only for the affluent?

It can be an expensive hobby, but so can others like yachting or golf. It is exclusive in that the number of active pilots in the UK is relatively small, about 20,000 who are current. The personal qualities of an interest in learning, determination and persistence to finish the course are just as important as finance.

People learn for a whole host of reasons. We have had:

- People looking for a career in aviation who wish to demonstrate in practical terms an interest in flying.
- People who are considering a career as an airline pilot but want to take a PPL first rather than move immediately to the cost and commitment of a CPL course.
- People looking for a new challenge after they have outgrown past interests and hobbies.
- For those who did not do well at school – to prove that they can learn something if it is interesting and enjoyable!
- For the ladies – just to prove that they can fly just as well as the men.

Whatever your motivation we hope you have found this guide useful and we shall look forward to seeing you at Almat Flying Club.

*** END ***