

# Ep 16 Knowledge And Wisdom

2020, Enid Otun  
If Women were meant to fly the sky would be pink  
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## Transcript

[0:00] Hello and welcome to the next episode of if women were meant to fly the sky would be pink. Knowledge and Wisdom I'm Enid Otun. In this episode, The Lagos Flying Club takes shape, and I take on students at the weekend.

More interesting tales from my secondment as I travel to Canada for my twin otter simulator training, and I learn valuable lessons on what not to do as a pilot.

[0:30] Music.

[1:00] I think there is a saying with knowledge comes wisdom.

Actually it was Alfred Lord Tennyson who once said, knowledge comes but wisdom lingers, either way it's true.

My reservoirs for knowledge were rapidly filling up, since I decided to take on flight instructing at the Lagos Flying Club.

I was doing a lot more hands-on stuff that I hadn't needed to do before, to get the club ready for students, and also private pilot's that wanted Club membership.

Nigeria did have one official flight training school in the north of the country, The Nigerian College of Aviation Technology which had been founded in 1964.

I relished being involved in the flight training of young aspiring pilots and making sure that the private pilot's we did have or able to do their Flying and have their flight checks carried out in a safe environment, instead of having to go overseas for checks.

With very little if any traffic in our training area out to the south west of Lagos, or west of Magbon, useful ground features with which to teach aspiring students, and facilities to support their ground training, I could put together a proper civil aviation PPL course.

[2:15] Which club funds low or tied up with other site requirements, I decided to order much-needed training materials out of my own pocket.

Luckily I was able to ask my colleagues to procure flight training books, charts, and other training materials and bring them back with them when they returned from their duty rotation,

we were more than happy to do so and pretty soon we were stocked up with what we needed and I was able to put together the training packs.

We were still off the electricity and water grid but we had a well dug, and we had a generator that provided the power that we needed for lights and fans.

Writing about it now I feel a glow of excitement and satisfaction when I think of what we created from very little, it's amazing what you can do when you feel inspired and are enjoying the process.

My first batch of students were mix of beginners and pilots who had flown some time ago but wanted to renew their licences and fly out of the club when they could.

[3:16] Given that we had only two aircraft I decided to use the Cessna 150 aerobatic trainer for training, and the Cessna 152 could be used by those who were qualified pilots for pleasure flying.

[3:28] We had our eye on another 2-seater trainer which was for sale by the Nigerian College of Aviation Technology so, we might yet expand.

One of my very first students was a young man who had the flying bug in a big way, his plan was to go to the training college in zaria once he had obtained a private licence with the club and a few extra hours under his belt, to carve out a commercial career. To say he was keen was an understatement.

He threw himself into the course with great enthusiasm and was the perfect candidate for the new setup.

Meanwhile back at the ranch, (my commercial day job) I was preparing to leave Lagos for Toronto to undergo my twin otter simulator training.

[4:12] I would be away for approximately a week and was looking forward to it.

Whilst I was away, the plan was to carry out the remaining building work at the club, and getting the classroom ready for use, so that I could carry out ground school training on my return.

[4:27] Canada was on my travel list as one of the places that I wanted to go to, but combining it with a simulator training was just the best thing ever.

[4:36] After a long flight via London, I arrived in Toronto for the very first time.

I was picked up and taken to my hotel which was within walking distance of the factory, in a place called Downsview.

On arrival I was excited to be taken on a tour of the De Havilland factory, which had been sold to Boeing aircraft in 1986.

[4:57] Up to this point, all of my training have been done on the real aircraft, so it was nice to see a fully capable twin otter simulator on site, supporting the training needs of customers of this iconic aircraft and their pilots worldwide.

I spent the next 5-days alternating between ground school refreshers and flight simulator training.

Our classes were generally small with no more than 7 of us on this particular rotation.

I was pleased to get to know fellow pilots operating the same type of aircraft in other parts of the world, and to be able to compare notes on the different types of flying that we did.

Most of my evenings were spent on my own in the hotel, studying the days notes making sure that I was getting as much as I could out of this training, or visiting the nearby shopping mall to stock up on my favourite stationery, yes that was a thing back then still is for me today to put it mildly.

I wish I'd had longer to explore though, even from this brief impression, I could tell that Canada was a country with so much natural beauty, the people were kind and welcoming, and I left hoping that I would one day have the opportunity to return.

[6:08] Music.

[6:21] As much as I enjoyed my time in Toronto and planned to return some day, it was very cold. These days I love the cold weather but back then, I found it a challenge, and anyway I was anxious to get back to my trusty twotters, which is what I call the twin otter aircraft.

I also had several students to teach at the weekends at the club so it was going to be a busy one for sure.

The following Monday morning I was back at my secondment on standby duty, it gave me a chance to do some paperwork and catch up with my colleagues before my new flying roster started, I had a series of night stops away and a couple of new destinations to plan for in the coming week.

Back on the roster in my secondment, I was flying several trips daily between Lagos and Eastern Nigeria, it was a tiring time with more flights put on the schedule for the next week due to a local conference.

During this time I couldn't devote any time to the weekends at the Lagos flying club so that was a little frustrating.

Instead I concentrated on trying to get enough rest between flights.

In the 80s, it was an acceptable practice to hit the bar after you came off duty and consume alcohol late into the night prior to your next scheduled on duty time.

Now for most of us this was done in moderation and whilst there were issues from time to time with this behaviour, they were nipped in the bud very quickly.

[7:43] I for one didn't have the stamina or inclination to participate, but as time went on I would be teased about it,

I still don't have a huge capacity for alcohol, I recently had two halves of shandy at the pub, and had to go to bed for a nap when I got home.

Thursday's houses thin as a beanpole as well so I wouldn't have been able to tolerate as much as the others even if I wanted to.

In the end I got fed up with the teasing and would join the crews in the bar always opting to leave early if I could.

The teasing would sometimes be along the lines of, hey if you want to join our ranks, you need to be able to hold your drink like the guys,

Now I didn't believe this for a second, but in those days, with women so few on the ground in this profession, there was a real need to be accepted on all levels, within reason.

The next few months found me trying to live up to that reputation in being able to hold my own whilst off Duty.

This was a mistake. I clearly didn't have the capacity to drink copious quantities of alcohol during this downtime, and the peer pressure was enormous.

With my additional workload having increased on a daily basis, coupled with my flight instructing duties at the weekend, my plate was full,

It would be a few weeks before I could catch up at the club, but as I had two weeks leave I decided to put them to good use at the flying club.

[9:07] There was a stack of club membership applications to go through with the board. In addition to this, the two training aircraft had undergone an overhaul whilst I was away and needed flight testing.

I also had to put together a private pilot's licence ground training school which would run all day each Saturday, to get the students ready for the theoretical exams that accompanied licence issue.

One of my first tasks though was to flight test the two aircraft and sign them off as airworthy, it would be nice to get airborne and fly over the beach this particular Saturday morning.

As the storm the previous night have cleared everything out and left a bright, calm, cool, and clear day with virtually no wind, perfect for flying.

[9:51] The Cessna 152 sounded and handled perfectly, as I leveled out at 1500 feet and headed South to the coast.

It was very relaxing to cross the sandy beach and look down with all its fishing boats readying for the days fishing.

I turned West to track up towards badagry village where I would then turn back north east on my return to Magbon.

Badagri, a historical village in Nigerian history was in sight, as the visibility was as far as the eye could see.

Badagri Village is 43 miles southeast of Lagos, and its situated on the bank of inland lagoons, a system of creeks and waterways that are navigable to Lagos.

The distance between the Lagoon and the ocean varies along the coast, but in badagri the distance is about a mile.

The depth of the Lagoon varies according to the season, from highs of 3 metres to lows of a metre.

The Lagoons also have a diverse fish population and that includes bonga, croaker, longfin, tilapia and catfish.

There is now a Heritage Museum which houses sculptures depicting slaves in Chains, the actual chains used during the trade and various artworks.

In the 80s when I visited the slave chains, they were situated where they had lain for many many years since the slave trade ended, on the beach.

[11:17] On a good day you could see them from the air if you drop down low enough, but not below 500 feet.

There is there the Aquia tree, a monument point where Christianity was first preached in Nigeria, the local market, the king's palace, the coconut beach as well as the island of no return, where the slaves were routed through to the ships, taking them to unknown destinations.

[11:45] The peak period of a slave trade in badagri was between 1736 and 1789, and it was dominated by Portuguese and Brazilian traders.

Slaves were transported from west Africa through badagri and by 1787, more than 550,000 African slaves had been transported to Europe, South America, and the Caribbean.

It also had one of the most popular slave markets in West Africa.

Fascinating though this historical information is, it's obviously horrifying to think of the reality of the lives of so many hundreds of African folk, who endured such unbelievable hardship at the hands of the traders and owners.

Landing back in magbon, I take the opportunity to map out traffic patterns for approaches to both ends of our single runway, logging potential areas of concern, and any restrictions that may need to be put in place.

As I'm taxing into park on the grass, I take note of the crater like hole that has opened up in the area of our parking stands, slightly hidden by grass, and I make a mental note to have the area roped off as well as filled in, just in case the next persons not so lucky.

I jump out and see our aircraft engineer who directed or maintenance staff to make the appropriate changes.

[13:11] While he was doing that, I walked over to our Cessna 150 to do my pre-flight inspection, before taking her into the traffic pattern around the airfield.

On my walk round, I noticed that one of the fresh air vents which filters fresh air into the cockpit during flight, had more than a few strands of what can only be described as nesting material.

This was to become a regular occurrence out at magbon, as nesting birds decided to use these vents to build their nests.

I duly incorporated this into the pre-flight checklist to draw the students attention to this local phenomenon.

With student applications reviewed, the applicants were asked to attend a formal interview for club membership, which was done under the cool thatched shelter of our open viewing deck.

This would be followed by a 30-minute introductory flight to assess whether the future student pilot understood what flight training really entailed.

With several candidates selected, mainly the ones who hadn't frozen in fear after takeoff, and the ones who hadn't graced me with the contents of their stomach during the flight, and we were ready to commence our courses.

[14:20] Along with the students, I also had applications from several licensed private pilot to wanted to use the club aircraft, the club rules stated that they were required to undergo a thorough flight check with me before they were cleared to fly our aircraft, and for some that went down like a lead balloon as you can imagine.

I surmised once again that I was running into the usual misogyny that accompanied women in positions of authority.

I remember thinking at the time that I was determined come hell or high water to change the narrative.

[14:54] Thank you for listening. as always your reviews and comments are very much appreciated. Thank you to Lucy Ashby for the editing of this episode.

If you want to ask a question or make a comment please do so on our social media sites, we are on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter or send us an email at [theskyspinkpilot@gmail.com](mailto:theskyspinkpilot@gmail.com).

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In the next episode, training continues at the lagos flying club and I fall out with some private members who know better than I do when it comes to training pilots, even though they have no instructor qualifications, my secondment comes to an end and I elect to return to

Bristow even though I'm offered a permanent job with mobil oil.

I address the peer pressure which is resulting in stressful situations off-duty.

**Thank you and goodbye.**

[16:00] Music.