

Andrew Gladders - Cadogan Scholarship

I felt very privileged to be interviewed at Cobham House in Central London for a flying scholarship and wanted to make the most of the chance. On arrival I took a short aptitude test and was then assessed by a welcoming and appreciative interview panel. I hoped that I had got across how much I wanted to learn to fly and explained my career plans, but before I knew it, I was back on the train returning to York. All I could do was wait. On receiving the news that I had been awarded the Cadogan Scholarship, I was absolutely delighted and really looked forward to studying hard and flying for the whole summer!



I started my flying lessons at Sherburn Aero Club the day after my last A Level exam. I was introduced by the Club's Chief Flying Instructor, Alistair Breckon, who made me feel very welcome. In advance, he had prepared all the equipment and materials for the course (also provided by the scholarship) which enabled me to start studying for the nine ground exams straight away. My first lessons in the Aero AT-3 with my primary instructor, Glenn Moody, were on the effects of controls, maintaining straight and level flight and trimming. I also learned about the effects of power changes, and how to use these to make coordinated climbs and descents. After this, I moved onto slow flying and stall recovery, which I previous experience of in gliders.

I really enjoyed the intensity of the training. When I wasn't flying, I spent my spare time studying for the exams. We moved on to flying circuits and this proved to be challenging as there was a lot more to think about and a greater attention to detail was required. I liked the fact that Sherburn has noise abatement procedures to adhere to, which makes the shape of some circuits slightly different. I think my judgement was also improved by the fact that the aerodrome has 3 runways, so I had to learn the circuit pattern for each runway and direction fairly quickly. The experience of changing runways when wind directions altered, also helped prepare me for different standard overhead join procedures on the way back from navigation exercises. After practicing glide approaches, flapless approaches, go-arounds and emergency procedures, I was ready for my first solo. This proved to be eventful though - I had to go around on my first attempt at landing as I didn't have enough airspeed to overcome wind shear!

Flying further solo consolidation hours improved my handling of the aeroplane in the circuit, while further practice with my instructor Glenn helped maintain my accuracy of flying in the circuit (1000 feet QNH, using correct power settings and keeping appropriate distance from the active runway).

Moving onto steep turns was the next stage, before practice forced landings and precautionary search and landings. Learning and remembering the correct procedures to execute PFLs was initially a challenge, but my technique improved after more practice attempts.

Navigation was definitely the most exciting part of my PPL. Flying accurately is one of the most important skills as a pilot and is important to maintain safe flight. I learnt how to use the CRP computer and create clear PLOGs. I started with short details to local areas such as

Scarborough and the Humber Bridge or disused airfields such as Binbrook. Once I was accustomed to using appropriate R/T, flying times and headings accurately, I completed land-aways at local airfields. These included Humberside and Durham Tees Valley Airports, which were the two intermediate airfields in my Qualifying Cross Country flight. After dual flights to both airfields and a solo flight to Humberside, I completed a low-level navigation exercise and land away to Netherthorpe airfield. Netherthorpe is home to the shortest licenced runway in England, although flying three circuits of the other runway was challenging in itself – it definitely helped prepare me for the practice of short field landings! Meanwhile, with my secondary instructor, Peter Atkinson, I started basic instrument flying, using ‘foggles’ and maintaining appropriate T-scans of instruments. I particularly enjoyed basic radio navigation, such as using two VOR radials to obtain a position fix.

Since the weather over the summer was consistently good, I was able to complete my QXC in early August, after completing all nine of my ground school examinations. I enjoyed operating alongside commercial traffic at both airfields, which made approaches and departures from them more interesting! After doing further revision flights with practice circuits and emergency procedures, my skills test was booked for the end of August. Happily I passed first time, although my examiner did give me some good advice after the test! After completing my FRTOL, I am currently waiting for my licence to be issued!

There are many people I would like to thank that have made this experience so memorable. Firstly, Glenn Moody, who was a fantastic instructor throughout my training and always sought the highest level of aeroplane operation. He continually encouraged me to be accurate and demonstrate sound airmanship - the fundamentals of flying. Without this calibre of tuition, I do not think it would have been possible to progress as well through my PPL. I would also like to thank my secondary instructor, Peter Atkinson, who gave me a very clear theoretical and practical instruction on circuit and basic instrument flying. I would particularly like to thank the operations team, managed by Julia Lillywhite, and the ground crew, who enabled me to complete my training without any delays. Likewise, the other PPL students who were very supportive and interested in how I was progressing.

I would also like to thank Alistair Breckon, Sherburn Aero Club’s CFI, who always asked how I was doing and gave exceptionally clear lesson briefs. He always found this time despite having the very demanding jobs of running the club and being an active instructor. I would thoroughly recommend Sherburn Aero Club to anyone thinking of visiting or learning to fly – the atmosphere and learning experience there is unrivalled.

Sherburn Aero Club has been the best organised and most welcoming training institution I have been part of. I have now begun night flying lessons there in order to obtain my Night Rating. I will continue to build the majority of my P1 flying hours based there, and I am looking forward to commencing my ATPL ground school examinations once my licence is issued by the CAA.

Most importantly, without the generosity of the Cadogan Charitable Trust and the effort put in by the Honourable Company of Air Pilots, I would not have been able to complete my PPL at such an early stage. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to do so!