

## THE AIR PILOTS BENEVOLENT FUND – JONATHAN BRADFORD

I started my training at the end of June 2017 at Tayside Aviation in Dundee. I carried out my training in a Piper Warrior (PA-28-161). On my first day I met my instructor James Whitby, who gave me an introduction to Tayside, and with good weather that day, I had my first ever flight in a powered light aircraft. Due to my previous glider flying experience, we completed the first few lessons fairly quickly as the weather was also on our side. My instructor and I managed to get three flights done each day over the first three days! The two days on my first week that I did not fly were used to start studying for the nine theory exams.

During my second week at Tayside I completed my first solo. Flying solo was an amazing experience. After completing my check flight, my instructor got out of the aircraft and went over to the control tower. It was a great flight, filled with a mixture of fear and excitement and everything went well. Having now gone solo in both gliders and powered aircraft it was a great feeling to have got that far



and be trusted with flying an aircraft on my own. I also sat three of my nine exams, Air Law, Operational procedures and meteorology in those first two weeks. After my first solo I completed three more solo consolidation flights in the circuit before moving onto navigation. Training at Dundee was fantastic due to the limited amount of commercial traffic, but a lot of private jets on occasions. It was fun to be taxiing out to the runway in front of a Global Express private jet!

When sitting my exams, I found that on the one occasion I was too quick to sit it and therefore did not achieve the required mark to pass, so learning that I should have taken more time to properly consolidate the knowledge. However thanks to the great ground school team at Tayside I passed it in the end. Finally I reached the point of doing solo navigation, It was a lot of fun, flying around some of the local area as well as flying further afield and seeing a bit more of Scotland. On many occasions throughout the navigation phase of training I found that weather was a large problem and caused a lot of delays in my training as a result. However, I put this time to good use, studying for exams and also taking a bit of time to relax as the training was very intensive and tiring.

After having spent a week at the UK Gliding Junior Nationals down in Gloucestershire, I was back up at Tayside to complete the last part of my training. After a late evening check flight to Cumbernauld and a flight over the new Queensferry Crossing through the

Edinburgh CTR, the next day I got to do my Qualifying Cross Country. This consisted of going through the Leuchars MATZ and over many areas I have been to and flown over in gliders before. After a final solo Navigation through the Edinburgh CTR in the evening to build up the last of my necessary solo hours, and the added bonus of completing all my exams, I got the same buzz as I did when I finished all my higher exams. Having finished all the exams, I was booked in for my Mock Skills Test with a different instructor, which made me very nervous, and the flight did not go particularly well. However in a way it was good that my mock test did not go so well, as it gave my instructor James an opportunity to review my skills and we had a lot to do in the 2hrs 30 mins revision time I had left. We completed both revision flights in the one day; they were a massive improvement on my mock test which gave me a lot more confidence going into my General Skills Test.



My examiner was one of the commercial instructors at Tayside, so I was a little nervous but he was very reassuring. I was given my route and off I went to plan. Unfortunately I had to cancel the first attempt due to weather restrictions. The next day the weather was good and I sat my skills test, passing first time, albeit that the crosswinds and turbulence on finals were an added complication to the flight.

When the examiner said that I had passed, I was ecstatic and couldn't wait to tell my parents. Finally all the hard work had paid off and I now have a PPL, all before I can drive a car! I met many new friends as well as people I already knew whilst at Tayside and having a PPL is another step towards applying for the Degree Course at Tayside Aviation. In the mean time I look forward to learning how to become one of the tug pilots at my gliding club, as it will be a great way to both build flying hours and gain more flying experience in an interesting way.

I would like to thank the Honourable Company of Air Pilots and the Air Pilots Benevolent Fund for supporting me in achieving a goal I would have otherwise taken a long time to achieve.

Jonathan D Bradford