

Samuel Griffith – Grayburn Scholarship

Tuesday 2nd May started early. I woke at 4am and left Hereford by coach at 5:30, London bound for my PPL scholarship interview. Bus delays meant I arrived with 15 minutes to spare to grab a quick cup of tea. Later the same week I had an email informing me of my successful application. I was thrilled, I couldn't wait for my exams to finish and my summer of flying to begin. Without delay I arranged to meet my flight instructor Geraint at Shobdon Airfield to discuss the plan of action for the summer. Later the same day I met a friend to play football and unfortunately broke my wrist. I ended up in A&E until 3am the next morning worrying about my forthcoming A-levels, whether I would get a Class 2 medical and if my flying scholarship had finished before even taking off! The future was painfully uncertain and this made me feel very apprehensive.

Thankfully at the end of my A-levels my cast was removed and I was able to get my Class 2 medical.

I commenced training a week after my final exam covering the basic elements of planning and preparation, such as how to check over a Cessna 152 before flight. During my first



flying lesson I was taught how to fly straight and level and trim accordingly - which seems very elementary writing this now. Between flights I completed ground school and studied hard for the 9 flight examinations. A typical day would see me fly at 9am and sometime later in the afternoon. At the end of the second week with 4 exams passed and 10.6 hours logged, my first solo milestone arrived. This moment was over in under 10 minutes but will remain vividly with me and my father, who was watching proudly from the control tower, for the rest of our lives. I was informed before my first solo circuit to focus on what was in front of me and not to look at the empty seat to my right. I also found it quite surprising how the aircraft handled differently as it was lighter with only myself on board.



Gradually I completed more and more solo time until I flew an hour of circuits. After this part of the training I moved onto steep turns with 45° bank angle. To my great surprise 2 RAF Hercules flew directly beneath us which is quite a sight when you are used to looking up to them at a couple hundred feet. As part of the navigation training I visited Kemble, Wellesbourne and Turweston where we took G-BHAA for a repaint and interior refurbishment. Completing my Qualifying Cross Country (QXC) to Leicester then Wellesbourne was a major step forward for me as I planned and controlled every aspect of the flight; I felt like a true pilot for the first time!



Nearing the end of September I had completed all the 45 hours of my training and was ready for the PPL skills test. As with any flight it heavily relies on the weather. Unfortunately the poor British weather had meant a few of my booked tests were cancelled as I waited nervously for almost a week to put all my training to the test. On Thursday 28th September I woke and saw how perfect the day was for flying, I knew today was the day. I navigated north, just west of Shawburys Military Air Traffic Zone (MATZ) to Ellesmere then through the MATZ and got diverted to Bridgnorth. Before long the navigation part of the test

was over and we moved onto general handling and a few circuits nearing the end. My final landing came and I realised how quickly 2 and a quarter hours had gone. I felt exhausted but accomplished and was extremely relieved when Chris my examiner informed me I had passed. Chris gave me some constructive points for improvement in the debrief and I learnt a handful of things just from this flight. Ending with a strong sense of completion this concluded my amazing summer of flying at Shobdon.



I would like give a huge thank you to the Cadogan Charitable Trust for the PPL funding, the Honourable Company of AirPilots for this wonderful opportunity and Herefordshire Aero Club for providing this

intensive course with such support from the small community at the airfield.

I would especially like to thank Geraint my instructor for all the important lessons I have learnt, intensive ground school and some very early starts to get airborne!

I am greatly looking forward to start on my night rating, do some differences training on the 4 seater PA28 and take up my family and friends.