

Eleanor White – Grayburn Scholarship 2024

Hiya! I'm El and I was lucky enough to be awarded a PPL Scholarship in 2024. I had the most amazing summer flying at Lee-on-the-Solent with the fabulous instructors at Phoenix Aviation.

My main instructor (Ben Townsend) had only finished his FI course a few weeks before my training started; so I think there was learning done by the both of us! It also turned out that he had started out as a PPL student at Phoenix Aviation too, so it was nice to know that he had been in my shoes. I found the whole process really enjoyable, not only because flying is great fun,



but also because there was so much support available through the flying school and my HCAP mentor. My mentor (Jack Lippiatt) was someone I, oddly enough, knew before the scholarship and he proved to be a great source of encouragement and accountability.

Throughout the course of the scholarship, there were inevitable some issues; as often happens, some of the aircraft which Phoenix fly needed to go in for either inspections or repairs – leaving the club with fewer aircraft. This can cause issues when working on such a short timeline! However, due to the work of Mr Frank Thompson, I never had to wait more than a few days for a slot on an aircraft – even if it was 45 minutes and a few quick circuits in between bookings to prevent skill fade.

Right at the end of my training I did a practice test with a different instructor (Rob Chapman) to make sure that I was up to scratch and prepped for the general skills test. I felt so confident right up until I sat in the cockpit, looked at my PLOG and realised that I had mis-oriented my compass and all my headings were 90° off! I quickly went through all my legs and changed the headings...but forgot to account for wind. Not ideal on a 25kt day. As I was flying the practice test I was constantly having to re-adjust my headings to account for the wind – it felt like I was constantly flying a diversion! After finishing the flight and going through a full debrief, it was then time to prep for the real GST.

The weather for my GST was a little blustery but looked to be the best day we were getting for a while so we went ahead with the test. I'm glad to say it went a lot better than the practice and my diversion seemed very easy in comparison! It also helped that my

examiner (Andy Walker) had a career path very similar to the one I want to go down so was a font of knowledge on that front.

I cannot recommend the HCAP scholarship enough, it was an incredible experience and has (hopefully) set me off on a lifetime of flying.