

It all started with an application. I was made aware of the scholarship by a previous winner, who has used his PPL to hour build towing gliders. With the intention of going onto a CPL. I was invited to an interview at Cobham House in London and met a few of the other candidates. We sat the aptitude test and had a short interview before being told, we would be informed via email. The next day, an email popped into my inbox, informing me I had been successful.



After confirming my choice of Booker Aviation, based out of Wycombe Air Park. I collected my course materials and had a tour of the facilities on a rainy mid-June day and had my first lesson for a couple of days later. Where I was partnered with primary instructor, Dickie Bird. Dickie introduced himself and we talked about my previous gliding experience, the differences between powered and glider flight before flying our first sortie in the Cessna 152. Exploring the effects of the controls, climbing, descending and level flight before moving on to slow flight, stalling and circuits. The high calibre of instruction I received enabled me to swiftly progress to solo standard and after completing my Air law exam, I flew my first powered solo after just over five hours of instruction. The feeling was fantastic, after the obligatory picture, I was introduced to my second instructor, Mehran Molavi. Mehran took me for a check flight the next day, before clearing me to fly solo circuits. The fast pace of the training enabled me to quickly progress, something which would not have been possible without the scholarship!

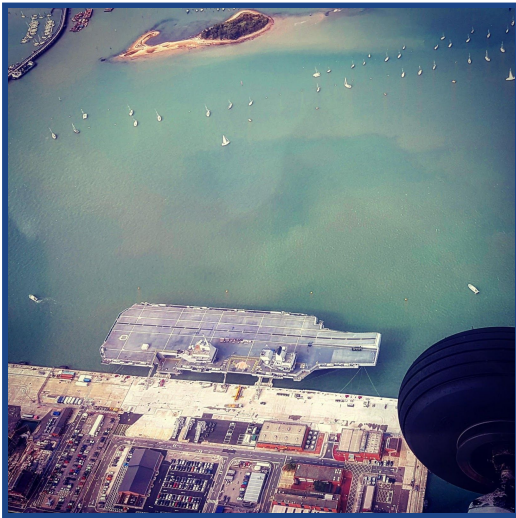


After flying 2 hours in the circuit, I moved on to flying in the local area. This was good fun, and was an opportunity to practice more general handling. This is the first time, I felt a sense of freedom, being able to decide what direction and height I wanted to fly. After I had completed the navigation and meteorology exam, I moved onto the navigation exercises. The first dual navigation route we flew was Henley-on-Thames, Greenham Common, Grove and back to Wycombe. This was followed by another dual navigation exercise, this time to the North of Wycombe, before finally flying a random navigation and a diversion. Next I flew these two navigation exercises solo - giving me 2 hours solo cross country time.

I was finally ready to fly the dual qualifying cross country, the 150nm flight, with 2 land aways. Having flown numerous glider cross country flights solo, this certainly was different, with the focus on accurately staying on track, precise timekeeping and correct radio procedures! After flying Wycombe - Peterborough Conington - Wellesbourne Mountford - Wycombe dual, I was cleared to fly the route solo. I managed to book a cessna for the following Sunday. The weather turned out to be perfect (unlike most of this summer), and I arrived early, having pre planned the route, only needing to add the wind and to check NOTAMs. After obtaining PPR and running through it with the instructor, I checked the cessna out, filled it to tabs, booked out and was on my way. The turnaround at Conington needed to be fast, a quick visit to the tower to settle the landing fee and to get the QXC

paper signed, then back to the aircraft to dip the tanks, then off to Wellesbourne. Enroute to Wellesbourne talking to Birmingham zone between the outbound airliners has certainly is one of the highlights of the course! After a 50 minute cruise, I said goodbye to Birmingham zone, flew and overhead join and was in the cafe enjoying a sandwich before I knew it!

After flying the QXC my logbook totalled 30 hours, so to build the rest of the hours, I flew a mixture of solo flights, dual navigation, instrument flying and other general revision. I was able to visit numerous different airfields, such as Sywell, Sandown and Thruxton and a variety of different, typically British weather conditions, which helped boost my confidence greatly. The flight down to Sandown certainly has to be recommended, apart from the fantastic service you can receive from Farnborough LARS West. The flight over Portsmouth harbour is absolutely stunning.



After 45 hours I was recommended for test, the examiner, Alistair Stevenson, with whom I'd passed my RT license with, which helped calm my nerves. I was explained the format, given a route to plan and told which Cessna we would be using. The route was Wycombe - Tower Farm - Broadway, with a diversion to be expected on the last leg. After a thorough walk around, we took off and started the navigation. The visibility was acceptable but quickly improved by the time we were on the last leg for the diversion. The diversion was to Holmbeck Farm, I produced a track, heading, distance and ETA. Then using Silverstone racing circuit and Turweston as landmarks, Wing disused airfield came out of the morning haze and the main runway pointed directly towards the small grass airfield of Holmbeck Farm. Happy with the diversion we went on to practice the general handling element of

the test, before flying 3 circuits and a full stop. "Congratulations, that was very nice. I'm pleased to say you have passed".

I have many people to thank for the scholarship, for which I am truly grateful for. Firstly Angie and the Scholarship committee for organising and selecting me for the scholarship. Booker aviation, and my instructors Mehran Molavi and Dickie Bird for all of their fantastic help and instruction. But especially Past Master of The Company, Michael Grayburn for funding the scholarship. I have spoken with the Chief Tug Pilot of the London Gliding Club, whom is happy to coach me through the Sailplane towing rating and onto being a tug pilot. This will facilitate hour building, with the intention of continuing my training towards an FATPL next year.

