



2017 PPL Scholarship,
Scholar report.



The summer I got my wings. Gaining my PPL
with the Sir Sefton Brancker Scholarship.

By Ben Rourke

The Beginnings

I have always been passionate about Aviation and transportation in general. Ever since I was around 5, I used to visit military airfields with my uncle, an ex Harrier Engineer in the Royal Navy, watching the planes land and takeoff. I was forever amazed at the responsibilities that pilots possess and the places they connect. Looking at the opportunity to be part of this special industry I took it upon myself to submerge into the world of flying wherever possible! Being somebody who has a desire to constantly learn and develop new skills, I started gliding, joined the Air Cadets, and got a job in a busy seaside restaurant to fund my gliding. At 16, I decided to start my PPL at my local airfield. However, unfortunately, my local airfield closed and I had to stop flying for a while whilst I waited for the problems to be resolved.



Getting the Scholarship

Having heard about the Honorable company of Air Pilots from a Titan 757 pilot in my village, I decided to take a peek at the website and look into it further. I was 14 at the time so had to wait a few years till I could apply. However, in that time, I applied to a gliding scholarship with the Honourable company of air pilots and unfortunately was unsuccessful at the application phase. Fast forward a year, after reading the past winners reports over and over, and starting my PPL, it was time to apply again. This time for the PPL scholarship. After finally sending in my application after a month of editing, I eagerly waited for the email response to find out whether or not I had been successful this time around.



I was over the moon. I had a moment of euphoric happiness when the email came through telling me I had been successful at the application phase. I had been invited to the Honorable Company Air Pilots, company office, Cobham House, in London. With an early start, I spent the time on the train preparing myself for the most important interview of my life. Having arrived at Chancery Lane I enjoyed a quick Wetherspoons breakfast, amazed that people were drinking at

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Polishing off my Full English in no time, it was interview time. I made myself comfortable with the other 4 candidates sharing the interview session with me. Angie was very helpful, making the whole experience enjoyable and not at any point did I feel under pressure. Once a few forms had been signed, I had to complete a short aptitude test, consisting of mainly basic math and physics questions, before being whisked away by the immediate Past Master, Chris Ford for the interview itself. Joining Chris as an interviewer, Kat Hodge, A Senior first officer at Virgin Atlantic. I really enjoyed the interview, communicating my passion as calmly but as emotionally as possible to demonstrate my true desire and aspiration for my future as a commercial airline pilot. Happy with the interview, I left Cobham House, with another PPL scholar, Stan, who I immediately became friends with due to his kindness and a similar passion for flight. After bidding farewell, I headed back to quiet Suffolk and sat on the train revising for my geography exam, which was a week after the interview. Naturally, after an interview, you start to dwell on the negatives, the things that could've been better. However, after just a few days my doubts were put to rest when I received an email confirming that I had been awarded a highly prestigious and recognized Honorable company of Air Pilots private pilots license scholarship. I felt incredibly lucky that I would spend my summer flying and would have my PPL at the end of it. It provided the perfect motivation for my upcoming AS exams, which were over as soon as they started. It was time to fly!

My Base Airfield

With my local airfield closing just before I applied to the scholarship, I was tasked with finding a new airfield. With the aid of a local ex fighter pilot I found the perfect solution!



Crowfield Airfield (EGSO)

- Situated: Stowmarket Suffolk, inside the Wattisham MATZ
- 2 grass runways: One (740x45m) and a smaller one (655x27m).
- Training aircraft: Robin HR200. G-MFLE and G-MFLA.
- Instructor: John Scales, ex B737 captain amongst many other types.

TOP 5 HIGHLIGHTS OF MY PILOT TRAINING



1. FIRST SOLO

For any person, the first solo is a training highlight. Flying alone for the first time is an unforgettable experience.

2. FLIGHT TO DUXFORD

Little Ben was amazed by the light aircraft flying into Duxford, whilst he stood behind the fence. He was the other side of the fence this time.



3. SOLO CROSS COUNTRY

I flew to Peterborough and Norwich. Having the opportunity to fly between 3 airfields and taxi behind a Flybe Embraer was a fantastic experience.



4. SUNSET FLIGHT

To get enough hours to conduct my skills test, I took a few solo flights out, around the county. One stood out as I flew into the sunset, as the car lights came on.



5. SKILLS TEST

Having spent the summer, with the support of HCAP, working hard to pass 9 theory exams and learn how to fly, it all came together to allow the final handshake and "congratulations, you've passed".



Conclusion



In conclusion, I had the best summer of my life! Having always wanted to become a pilot, I had spent the summer training towards the final exam which I am happy to say I managed to pass without any problems, after some fantastic instruction from my instructor John at Crowfield. This scholarship has allowed me to gain my PPL at just 17 years old which is something I couldn't have possibly done without the support of the Air Pilots. Obtaining this scholarship will make a huge impact to my future, in pursuit of a career as an airline pilot. Firstly it will prove to recruiters that I am passionate and dedicated to the industry. It has also boosted me into the modular training routes, with already a substantial block of training completed.

I would like to take the time to thank the certain individuals in my village that have help and supported me through my journey so far, the entire family at Crowfield Airfield that has made my experience so smooth and enjoyable. John and Neil are always a pleasure to be around and Ross and Andrew are excellent Airfield owners. The Air Pilots have been fantastic and I cannot thank them enough for their support they have offered both financially and wisdom wise. Funded by the Air Pilots Benelovent fund, my scholarship was funded by a group of individuals keen to support young people like myself as well as many other charitable causes.

My next stage is to build up hours before completing my CPL and MEIR.