

PPL - Jackson Scholarship – Melissa Brooks

I was lucky enough to gain the Jackson PPL scholarship in 2018. This provided me with the opportunity to learn to fly at Andrewsfield Airfield, Essex and to gain my PPL completely from scratch. I am studying chemistry, maths and physics at A-level and have Russel Group University offers to study for a MEng in Aeronautical Engineering. I hope to continue a career in aviation engineering and use my newly gained pilot's license to teach others in my spare time and inspire future young people like myself to start a career in aviation. The scholarship has given me an opportunity I never would have otherwise had and I am very grateful to the Honourable Company of Air Pilots, Mr Jackson and to my instructors at Andrewsfield for providing me the resources to do this (and of course to the wonderful café at Andrewsfield for providing me with more bowls of cheesy chips than I care to count!).



My training began after my AS level exams in the summer of 2017, balancing school work and flying for the first few weeks. I flew the Cessna 152 (and despite being a tiny aircraft, being only 5'2 I still needed a cushion to see over the nose!). I then spent the whole of my summer holiday at the airfield, often flying for three hours a day but I really enjoyed it. I met many interesting people and instructors during my many lessons and while waiting around for a weather front to pass! I picked up the basic skills relatively quickly and progressed through the early part of the

practical syllabus at a good pace. In the time I wasn't flying I was teaching myself the content for the ground school exams and passed all of which by the end of the summer holiday. Unfortunately the summer was unsurprisingly very British and I lost many planned hours due to poor weather, as any pilot knows is an occupational hazard. But I powered through the disappointment and continued my training. I found the general handling to be very enjoyable and quickly progressed to the circuits. I spent many hours perfecting my circuits and became able to rattle off my checks in record time, even if my instructor struggled to follow them! In this time I practised a lot of crosswind landings, due to the nature of the summer wind!

My first solo was invigorating and unexpected- as it is often the instructor's choice to keep you in the dark about when they plan to leave you alone for the first time! I now have a painting of the exact plane I did it in on my wall! Not long after my first solo I moved onto the cross countries and very much enjoyed landing at new airfields, particularly the tarmac runways of large international airports such as Norwich and Southend, however stressful it may be, knowing there are



people waiting to go on holiday behind you! I did two solo short cross countries, the first was over Chelmsford area, which I know well from the ground but was very different from air! The second I did over towards Ipswich and all went to plan, despite very misty conditions! However my first solo land away took an unexpected turn. It had been many weeks since I had landed at this particular aerodrome due to unsuitable weather and a small airfield as it is, I unfortunately was unable to find it to start with. I had been relying too much on the feature I expected to see to identify it and not on my timings! I however was very close to it and pretty much just looking the wrong direction! I landed successfully and made it back to Andrewsfield without any issue. My second cross country and my qualifying both went without any issues, having learnt from my mistake. It wasn't then too long after this that I took my test and passed first time!

This has been an amazing experience that I could only have dreamt of before I gained the scholarship. I encourage anyone interested to apply and who knows where it could get you!