

RÉSHÉ HARRISON- TAG FARNBOROUGH AIRPORT SCHOLAR

I was six years old and halfway through my leukaemia treatment, and a children's cancer charity offered my family and I, the opportunity of a holiday to Walt Disneyworld in Florida. After landing



and getting off, I said to the Captain of the Boeing 747 aeroplane, "one day, I want to be just like you" to which the Captain responded: "Work hard, be the best and one day I hope to see you in the cockpit".

Those words have been the driving force in my journey to becoming an airline pilot.

When I was 13, I researched flying scholarships and came across the Honourable Company of Air Pilots and I was impressed by the work they have done since their founding. After waiting 4 years so that I was the minimum age, I submitted my application. Through a competitive selection process and interview at Dowgate Hill House in London, I was very delighted to hear that I was awarded one of the 2018 PPL Scholarships the following day whilst at college.

I undertook my training at Redhill Aviation Flight Centre (RAFC) based at Redhill Aerodrome (just outside of the Gatwick Control zone). I completed my PPL training in a Cessna 152.

I have been spoiled by the spectacular views of the South East coast and watching the countless aircrafts taking off and landing at Gatwick. All the while receiving excellent training from Dirk my instructor, who guided me carefully throughout the training to develop great airmanship, aviation industry knowledge and flying skills.



Completing a PPL in three months took a lot of hard work and dedication, coming in every day and making sure I had enough money to take the taxi from the station to the aerodrome.

I wasn't able to do anything else except eat, sleep and drink everything to do with aviation. This was rather fortuitous because it led to me completing all 9 exams in 6 weeks with an overall pass average of 97%.



After completing the exams, I went straight into the solo cross country which was from Redhill to Earls Colne airfield, then to Lydd Ashford Airport and back to Redhill. This was the most fun I have ever had whilst flying. I was captivated to see the views of the London skyline in the distance to the west, to flying over Southend airport to seeing France in the distance whilst flying towards Lydd Airport. I thoroughly enjoyed that flight.

After more revision, a few mock skills tests and brushing up with Finian Salter, who was also training at RAFC under the flight instructor scholarship, he recommended me for my skills test. The fact that Finian was the one who guided me in the run up to the last hurdle, was unprecedented considering he had only received his certification a few weeks before my recommendation.

After his recommendation, it was time for the skills test.

I arrived within plenty of time to give the aircraft it's "A" check, calculate my mass and balance, fuel calculations and plan my navigation route.

I was constantly telling myself the worst thing that could happen is the examiner not saying anything (a quiet cockpit is a boring cockpit!). After 2 hours of flying and having landed and shut down the engine. I endured an agonising wait before I eventually found out that I had passed!

All my hard work and study over the 3 months was for this very moment hearing the words "congratulations, you've passed".

I have been working with the PR and Marketing teams at TAG Farnborough Airport during my training. This provided me with the unique opportunity to fly into the world-famous TAG Farnborough Airport to meet the CEO Brandon O'Reilly and be interviewed and filmed by the local ITV News Meridian. The interview was later broadcast on the news that evening. Brandon O'Reilly congratulated me on being the youngest recipient, at only 17, of their scholarship in the 11 years that it has been running.





I would like to thank TAG Farnborough Airport and the Honourable Company of Air Pilots for providing me with such a fantastic and unique opportunity whilst also supporting and believing in me every step of the way. Since that memorable day when I was just six years old, I have worked towards my ultimate goal of becoming a professional pilot. The support of the Flying Scholarship has provided me with that vital stepping stone to go on to university to study Air Transport with Commercial Pilot Training and has ultimately given me the chance to make my dreams a reality.

