

Wrigley (BALPA BF) Scholarship

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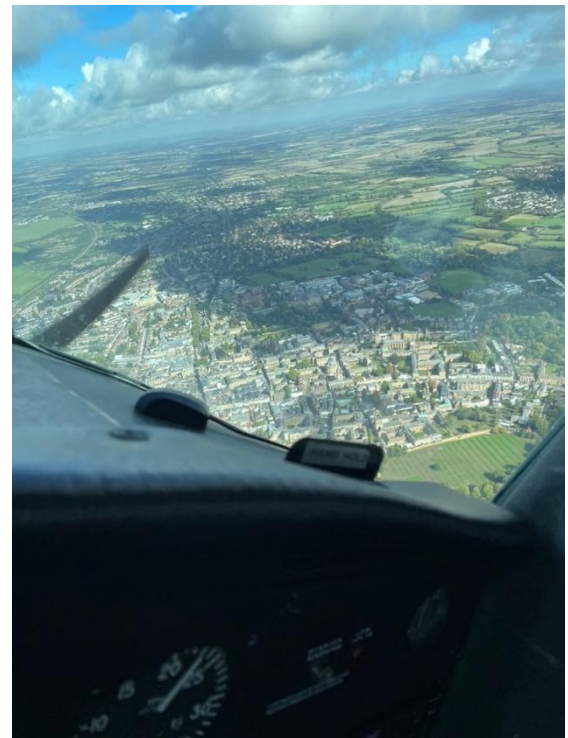
My love for aviation started when I joined the Air Cadets at 14, and from my very first flight in a Grob Tutor, I would never have believed to be completing my Private Pilot's licence four years later!

This summer has been a jam-packed whirlwind of theory, meeting other pilots and hands on soaring in the sky! From my first away landing at Duxford, holding for a Spitfire to flying solo to Leicester on my QXC, I thoroughly enjoyed every day of this adventure, be it flying new techniques to cramming in theory and learning so much every day! Completing my PPL in 2 months after finishing my A-Levels in June was extremely challenging and required a lot of commitment, determination and resilience, especially with the two-week straight band of rain and cloud! A PPL consists of 9 theory exams, a radio examination, a QXC and skills test, with a minimum of 45 hours flying- yes, a lot to fit in, which is why organisation, owning your training hours and enthusiasm for aviation is a must!



Thankfully, last year, I was awarded the HCAP gliding scholarship and am a Master Air Cadet, so had some airmanship and basic knowledge, but the theory side was a tight hurdle- 9 theory exams to be completed in a specific order before each milestone, often with tight turnarounds and a lot of time on "EasyPPL".

My first major milestone was doing my first solo circuits! After hours of flying round in circles to perfect my landing technique, I was extremely excited (and also relieved!) to finally do one solo. This for me took around 21 hours. This figure varies for everyone and their flying school syllabus (for future scholars, do not be alarmed if you have not gone solo asap- you have plenty of time!).



After this came more general handling and navigation – this concept was quite tricky at first, as we are used to seeing the ground from below, but after hours in the sky, you start to recognise towns and specific markings to help guide you. I thoroughly enjoyed navigation after getting the hang of it- diversions were also hard to understand but with a CRP-2 plotter and map laid out on my bedroom floor, I swiftly gained a great understanding.



Next, after a few landaways, both dual and solo, I completed my QXC from Denham to Leicester to Duxford- squeezing it in between the partial good weather and air shows! This was an amazing adventure, with just you, the radio and your plog, I loved these solo navigations, building my love for flying, just watching the world below go by.

Lastly, after many revision hours and 45.00 exactly, I passed my skills test on the 19th of September 2025! My warning to future scholars: plan around the

weather!! Yes, I was ready over a week in advance, just waiting for the clouds and storms to move away from Denham- a long, painful week waiting with my date being postponed multiple times. On the other hand, I spent plenty of time armchair flying my skills test, which I thoroughly recommended to cut down on actual flying hours and consolidating- my brother definitely knows how to fly from all those blurting sessions with him, despite never being in a plane!

For my test, I first completed the navigation leg, with a diversion to Oxford, then completed the general handling sections before returning to Denham for circuits. After landing and coming to a complete stop, I was delighted when my examiner told me I had passed! A whole summer of flying in the Cessna 152s, hours upon hour reading and



revising, and many more waiting for the clouds to pass, all these feelings passed over me, feeling a wave of excitement, relief and amazement that my hard work and busy work of the summer had paid off!!

I would firstly like to thank The Pilot Centre (Denham) for taking me on to do my training, becoming my second home, and all the instructors there (Eva, Mark, Celine, Greg, Mina, Jeremy and all those that helped me along the way) for believing in me and teaching me everything they know about flying as a private pilot.

I cannot thank enough my amazing sponsors from the BALPA Benevolent Fund and everyone at the Honourable Company of Air Pilots for giving me the chance to pursue my dreams in aviation, a stepping stone into my future career as a pilot. I feel so grateful and lucky, from just 13 of over hundreds of applicants, it has been amazing to go along this journey with



other keen minded aviation lovers. Lastly, a massive thank you to Piers (my PPL buddy from 2024). He has been there every step of the way and made my summer so much easier, from his motivation, advice and support, I could not have completed the scholarship as efficiently as I did without him!! I cannot wait to see how my future unfolds!!