

Bob Dawson PPL Scholarship

Phoebe Buckley

What an incredible summer 2022 has been! I cannot believe I can now say I am a Qualified Powered Pilot. Over these past 3 months, I've learned to love the Cessna 150/152 and I've learnt that I really do feel at home in the sky.

After finishing my A Levels on the 21st June, I simply couldn't wait to start at Hull Aero Club and by the 23rd June I was already a couple of hours into my training. I've been a glider pilot since the age of 12 at my local club, Wolds Gliding Club, and in December 2021 I'd completed my first solo in a powered aircraft (Aquila A211) as part of the Air Cadet Pilot Scheme at Tayside Aviation. The previous skills I'd gained meant I was back solo in the circuit at Beverley in no time, and yet, the feeling of flying solo never got old!



First Solo in a Cessna



Cross Country Flight

My favourite part of the PPL training was definitely my Qualifying Cross Country (Beverley-Nottingham-Sherburn-Beverley). Flying alongside Doncaster Sheffield and looking down below to see a 737 taxiing on the runway was a feeling like no other. Once I'd landed back at Beverley after my adventure, I felt such a huge sense of achievement. Just two months ago, I had little powered experience, and now I'd completed a solo navigation flight of just over 150nm with two remote landings. Driving home that evening, I certainly did not stop smiling...

After lots of hard work, 9 theory exams, mock tests and all the requisite flight exercises, I was ready for my Skills Test. Unfortunately, after a few cancellations, my Radio Practical Test fell on the same day as my Skills Test. I told myself Tuesday 27th September was going to be my day, and so it proved to be! My Skills Test came first that afternoon, and as soon as I met my examiner, he put me at ease instantly. It was a great flight, and it really did prove that one can take nothing for granted (even with lots of planning) as Doncaster ATC cleared us to cross their airspace but then changed their instructions. It certainly kept me on my toes! Hearing 'congratulations, you've passed' was honestly one of the best feelings in the world - all my hard work had paid off! That evening, I had my Radio Practical exam, and again, once I'd got started, I felt relaxed and tried to treat the radio like I would if I was flying.

When I was told I'd passed that also, I was absolutely thrilled. In that moment, I realised I had successfully completed my training and could apply for my PPL which I did the next day.



Straight after passing my Skills Test!

I can't wait to introduce my family and friends to the world of aviation as well as travel to new places, help at gliding clubs, and progress further through my flight training. Gaining my PPL is only the beginning of my flying aspirations...

Thank you BALPA Benevolent Fund for sponsoring this amazing Scholarship, the Honourable Company of Air Pilots for believing in me and selecting me for such a prestigious award, but also Hull Aero Club for supporting me throughout my training – both on the ground and in the air! It's been the BEST summer.

Next stop, Tayside Aviation where I'll continue my flight training. This is through the BSc (Hons) Degree in Aviation Programme with Frozen ATPL which I'm so excited to start in the upcoming months!