

Charlie Gazzard - Cadogan Scholarship

On my 7th birthday, my parents gifted me my first video camera. We went to Bristol Airport for the whole afternoon and recorded the planes taking off and landing. From that day onwards, my gaze has been transfixed on pursuing a career in aviation.



At the age of 12, I joined the Air Training Corps (2494 Sqn) and completed my first air experience flight at RAF Colerne at the age of 13. This first experience taking control of an aircraft further reinforced my desire to enter a career of flying. I completed 5 air experience flights at RAF Colerne and MoD St. Athan before being awarded my Silver Gliding Scholarship to be completed at RAF Little

Rissington with 637 VGS. This was spread over 5 months up to my first solo flight in the Viking T1 glider. At 17 years old, I completed the Air Cadet pilot scheme scholarship at Tayside where I completed my first powered solo in the Aquila A211 and gained my first 12 flying hours.

In 2019, I applied for a PPL Scholarship with the Honourable Company of Air Pilots and unfortunately did not succeed past the application stage. As 2020 was the year of the pandemic, I reapplied in 2021. I was absolutely delighted in May this year to find out I was successful through all stages of my second application attempt. After a few obstacles with my initial choice of flying school, I started my scholarship on the 20th June after being redirected to Cotswold Aero Club. After only a few lessons, I was extremely grateful that this change of school occurred.

On my first flight, the views of the Malverns, Cotswolds and River Severn were breathtaking - I don't think I ever took these picturesque views for granted throughout the duration of training! Although initially rusty having not flown in around 2 years, my instructors Phil Mathews and Kevin Davenport quickly brought me back up to



speed. I completed all of my training in the Robin DR400, mostly in the G-HANS aircraft. The Robin has a fair few differences from the Aquila I had previously flown; the Robin has mixture, does not have toe brakes and does not have a variable pitch propeller just to name a few. Fortunately, I was back up to doing solo circuits on my second day of flying.

After learning advanced turns, more emergency procedures and how to rejoin the circuit, I was soon on to solo local navigation flights. As Gloucestershire Airport has runways 09-27, 18-36 and 04-22, I initially found joining the circuit hard to visualise and carry out. However, this confusion eventually disappeared and the penny dropped.

My first solo landaway at Shobdon airfield was an amazing experience and filled me with a great sense of achievement. Within a week, I was embarking on my Qualifying Cross Country flight which was by far the highlight of my scholarship. My route to Sleaf Airfield, via Shobdon airfield and Lake Vyrnwy was on a crystal clear day and I was very lucky to admire the stunning views over the northern Welsh mountains. To top it off I was also able to see an old friend at Sleaf (a friend from my air cadet scholarship in Tayside)!



After a long period of not knowing the best way to revise the subject content for the theory exams, I eventually found a method which worked for me and was able to complete them all in a relatively short period of time.

Not long after my Qualifying Cross Country and completion of exams, the big day was upon me. My examiner, Mark Bills, flew into Gloucestershire from Bristol and instantly put me at ease when we met each other. We discussed my training up to that point and discussed my planned route to Bromyard, Banbury and then back to Gloucestershire. Shortly after my walk around of the aircraft, the skills test began. With stronger winds on this particular day than what I was used to, I found the first leg of the navigation more challenging than I thought it would be. However, once accustomed to the wind, I was much more comfortable with the rest of the test and it was over before I knew

it. Upon my final landing after the circuit section of the test, I was thrilled to find out that I had passed.



I would like to thank the Honourable Company of Air Pilots and the Cadogan Charitable Trust for awarding me this very prestigious once in a lifetime opportunity. Being awarded this scholarship and gaining my PPL has massively accelerated my route into aviation and has been a very large financial help; for this I am extremely grateful. I would also like to thank my instructors Phil Mathews and Kevin Davenport at Cotswold Aero Club for their masses of support and their high quality of training. I look forward to building my hours and continuing to pursue my career in aviation, hopefully gaining my CPL and ATPL in the near future.