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The Dunmore Scholarship 2024

I've wanted to become a pilot for as long as I can remember. Growing up, I seized every opportunity to get involved in aviation: from joining the Air Cadets and flying a glider solo on my 14th birthday, to flying solo in the Grob Tutor as part of the Oxford University Air Squadron. For the past four years, I applied to the Honourable Company of Air Pilots without success. However, this year I was invited for an interview, and I was determined not to waste the opportunity. While preparing for my final university exams, I received a thrilling phone call - I had been successful!

Early July: beginning the PPL training

I chose to complete my scholarship at Full Sutton Flying Centre in East Yorkshire, a quiet grass strip located next to a Category A prison - a restricted area. The aircraft availability was great, with two PA28s and one PA38 on offer. My flying began on July 1st, 2024, with a familiarisation flight around York and East Yorkshire. Seeing the coastline from above for the first time was fantastic.

I quickly settled into a routine of flying, sometimes logging over four hours a day to make the most of the good weather, and evening study for my theory exams. Just two weeks in, I completed my first solo flight in the PA38. The sense of freedom was incredible, and I was enjoying every second of it.

July-August: hour-building

The next phase involved solo hour-building in the circuit as well as navigational sorties, which quickly became my favourite part of the summer. Flying over Leeds Bradford and Teesside Airport in Class D airspace and landing at airfields like Nottingham City, Fishburn, Sherburn, and Tatenhill gave me a real sense of what private flying is all about. This built my confidence for my Solo Qualifying Cross Country Flight.



Image 1 - Crossing Leeds Bradford Airport through the Control Zone.

On August 13th, in perfect flying weather, I completed my Solo Qualifying Cross Country Flight. The route took me to Nottingham Airport via Scunthorpe and Newark. I felt a strong sense of nostalgia landing in Beverley on the way back – the same place I had taken my first trial flight eight years previously when I was just 13-years-old. I was overcome with pride as I parked up alongside the very same aircraft (G-HULL) I had flown in all those years ago. After a short hop back to Full Sutton, I had completed one of the most challenging yet rewarding parts of my PPL training. The finish line was in sight.



Image 2 – The aircraft I flew my Cross-Country flight on (G-TMHK), parked next to the aircraft I completed my first trial flight in 8 years ago (G-HULL).

August 2024: completing the PPL

By the end of August, I had passed all nine theory exams, completed 45 hours of flight training, earned my Flight Radiotelephony Operator's Licence (FRTOL), and was ready for the skills test. Having been blessed all summer with clear skies, it seemed only fair that my first skills test was cancelled due to bad weather. When a pocket of sunshine appeared five days later, I took full advantage. After a flight over to Skegness, packed with general handling, diversions, VOR tracking, circuits - and Kit-Kats - I was thrilled when the examiner informed me that I had passed. I was now a qualified pilot!

None of this would have been possible without the generous support of The Honourable Company of Air Pilots and everyone involved in fundraising for the Dunmore Scholarship. I'm so grateful for the opportunity they have given to me. I'd also like to extend a huge thank you to Martin Stocks, Jason Gilmour and Grahame Keating, my instructors at Full Sutton, for making the process seamless and always ensuring aircraft and instructor availability. A special thank you to my HCAP buddy, Mollie, whose tips and tricks made a world of difference to my training.

For anyone wanting to become a pilot, applying for the HCAP scholarship is an incredible opportunity. It took me four years to be successful, so don't give up even if you don't get good news the first time you apply!



Image 3 - Post Skills Test. Celebrating with Martin Stocks, head of training at Full Sutton.