



**The Honourable Company of Air Pilot's
Private Pilot's Licence Scholarship 2018
Generously sponsored by The Cadogan Trust
Scholarship report by Fahim T. Ahmed**

This time last year (October 2017), I would never have dreamt of having my first pilot licence the following year at the age of 18. A dream from the age of 6, my career ambition is airline pilot which would combine my two passions of aviation and travel. I first became aware of The Honourable Company of Air Pilots several years ago, when they were GAPAN, however I waited patiently for several years to apply in 2018 when I would finally be old enough to be eligible for the PPL scholarship.

At the same time as applying for this scholarship, I was still deciding between The University of Glasgow and the Imperial College London for the Meng Aeronautical Engineering course to start September 2018 but have since decided to take a gap year with a deferred place at The University of Glasgow. I will be using next 12 months or so to work full-time to fund travels and build my flying hours whilst also exploring and researching the plethora of pilot training programmes offered by airlines and academies whether that be self-sponsored, airline-sponsored, integrated, modular, you name it.

The application process consisted of an application, interview and mental dexterity test. Following many revisions of the application, I finally sent it away a couple days before the deadline in March. A month later, I received an email saying I was one of 24 candidates to have passed the application phase and that my interview was on May 1st in London. This was 2 days before my final Advanced Higher Mathematics exam so I had to fly there and back on the same day. My flight with Flybe was at 6:30am from Edinburgh, arriving at London City Airport at 8am. I had 6 hours to kill before my interview at 2pm so I found a Starbucks near the company office and prepared for the quiz and interview.

Feeling prepared and ready, I headed to Dowgate Hill House, where I met some of the other interviewees. After meeting Angie and Tricia, I sat the test which was problem solving and surprisingly had some Advanced Higher Mechanics content in it. Then came the interview with Steve and Ollie, respectively a First Officer with BA Cityflyer and retired RAF pilot. At the time, I thought it went great as I was feeling very confident and felt more like a relaxed conversation about aviation than an interview. After the interview, I walked into the centre of London to meet a friend who lived there to grab a quick dinner and then went back to London City Airport to get my flight back to Edinburgh at 7:20pm. Due to rush hour on the Tube, I turned up to the airport at 7:10pm and I remember thinking I was definitely missing the flight but thankfully they had only just started boarding at that time. Such a relief that the flight had been delayed.

2 days and an Advanced Higher Maths exam later, I got the email saying I had got the scholarship as I went for a cheeky Nandos with some mates after sitting the exam.

After obtaining my Class 2 Medical in May from an AME in Glasgow, I began my training at Tayside Aviation in June whilst finishing up my final year (S6) in secondary school. The aircraft I was training in was the Piper PA-28-161 Warrior II. Due to school in June and work/holidays in early-to-mid July, I only began full-time training in late-July. By this point I had completed Phase 1 of training which consisted of Aircraft Familiarisation, Emergencies, Taxiing, Effects of Controls, Slow Flight, Turning, Climbing, Descending, Stall Recovery and Spin Avoidance/Recovery.

Phase 2 was touch-and-go circuits over the River Tay where I learnt more about takeoffs, airmanship, ATPL, pre-landing and CRAP checks, and the different kinds of landings such as 2-stage flaps, 3-stage flaps, flapless and glide approaches. After circuits, I had begun the dual navigation sorties which meant as soon as I went solo I could do the solo navigation flights straight away. The first solo was extremely memorable as I completed a circuit over the Tay and landed with 3-stage flaps on runway 27 at Dundee Airport.

By the time of my first solo navigation, aside from the dual navigations, I'd already done Practice Forced Landings, Precautionary Landings, Advanced Turning, Diversions, Basic Radio Navigation and Instrument Flight. Dual navigation flights consisted of MATZ penetration over RAF Leuchars and CTZ crossing over Edinburgh. After the solo navigation check flight, my first solo nav was Dundee-Brechin-Blairstown-Dundee, where I spoke to Scottish Information. The subsequent solo nav consolidations were through the Leuchars MATZ and Edinburgh CTZ.

Then came the Aerodrome Landaways, first a dual to Fife and back with my instructor. On the way back we did a feature-crawling exercise in simulated bad weather conditions. A couple of hours later, I flew to Fife by myself which was challenging but extremely fun as the runway is only 700m long and they only have an Air/Ground service on the radio, compared to the 1400m runway and full ATC at Dundee. Then I did the dual flight to Cumbernauld, followed by the solo, which meant I was then ready for the Qualifying Cross Country. The 151 nautical miles QXC flight was Dundee-Fife-Cumbernauld-Dundee and couldn't have gone better. The landing at Fife was on runway 24 which I had never done before but the A/G radio operator at the time said it was one of the best landings he'd ever seen, even though the approach was extremely bumpy due to gusting winds. At Cumbernauld, the overhead join was performed successfully and even though a helicopter cut in front of me on my final approach onto runway 26, the flight went incredibly well and there was definitely a large sense of accomplishment. At that point, I just had to fly back from Dundee so after getting the QXC certificate signed in the tower and a quick snack in the café I began my journey back to successfully complete the QXC.

I had a pre-mock revision flight to prepare me for the mock skills test and overall that went really good. My instructor said I only had to revise general handling as my navigation was flawless so we covered things like slow flight, stalls, spin recovery, steep turns, PFLs, gliding turns and the different types of landings. After a successful mock skills test, it was time for the final test. After nearly 2 weeks of postponed flights due to 30-40kt gusting winds, I was finally able to get my skills test done on Wednesday 10th October. The route for the test was Dundee to Stonehaven (near Aberdeen) and then southwest towards Alyth. As we taxied into Tayside Aviation after the test, I was told I had achieved a really good pass and was one of the best skills tests the examiner had done. Throughout the PPL flight training, I also sat the 9 theory exams with an average pass mark of 96% and also achieved an "excellent pass" in the practical RT exam.

I went back the following day to complete some paperwork and submitted the online PPL application to the CAA. The same day, I said my goodbyes to everyone in Dundee and headed back to Edinburgh. After 4 months of training, I had finally obtained my PPL.

None of this would have been possible without the support and motivation of so many people. First of all, thank you to Ms. Judith McColgan at George Heriot's School. Without Ms. McColgan's input and sacrifice of her time, my application would never have come close to being as strong and succinct as it was in the end. Thanks also to those who were able to provide written character references for my interview. They include Mr Jeremy Scott, Dr Alison Neilson, Mr Joshua Thomson-Smith, Mr Oliver Weall and Mr Zahid Khan.

Of course, thank you to my instructor, Mr Iskandar Pedash, whose banter and enthusiasm made the flying even more fun and will certainly miss having him in the right-hand seat. I met many like-minded people along the way who I'll hopefully see on the flight deck one day, in particular Cecil Carvalho, who came up from Liverpool to obtain his PPL over the summer; his company made my training so much more enjoyable and we ended up staying together while we completed our training.

My gratitude extends to those who were able to give me a place to stay in Dundee to save me from travelling up from Edinburgh everyday by train: Phil Cooper and his flatmates, who let Cecil and I stay in their flat over the summer, and Alasdair who let me stay in his university accommodation in the final weeks of my training, along with his flatmates Jack, Sarah, Nikki, Sophie and Esra.

Final thanks go to Tayside Aviation, for providing the place and planes for training. With the friendly people and large fleet of aircraft, my training there was top class and would highly recommend it to everybody. Thank you to the entire team at The Honourable Company of Air Pilots and The Cadogan Trust for awarding me the scholarship and opportunity to gain my private pilots licence so early on. This is definitely only the beginning, and this has certainly jump-started my journey to achieving my dream of being an airline pilot.



PPL Certificate from Tayside Aviation



After passing the final skills test



Solo flight to Fife



Proud student and instructor after passing skills test and sending application to CAA



My instructor Iskandar and I in the PA28 cockpit



Lining up for takeoff on runway 27 at Dundee



On final for runway 27 at Dundee



On final for runway 09 at Dundee