

# My world

Georgia Pescod, 17, is the winner of the Attagirls Molly Rose Pilot Scholarship, named in honour of one of the brave women pilots of World War II

INTERVIEW **JANE YETTRAM**

I've wanted to be a pilot since the age of four. My dad is an aircraft maintenance quality surveyor and we live really close to Cambridge Airport as well as the historic airfield Imperial War Museum Duxford. We'd always be visiting Duxford and going to air shows. I loved it – and wanted flying to be my life. In fact, my younger sister, Emma, wants to be an air traffic controller. We always joke that she'll have to give me clearance to land.

I've been in the Air Cadets since I was 12, and we do loads of aviation-related activities. I've already got a place at a flight school in Oxford for next year, after I've finished my A levels in maths, physics and economics. I plan to do my commercial licences, and study for a degree alongside that.

Last year, I was researching scholarships online, and the Attagirls Molly Rose Pilot Scholarship popped up. I made it to the shortlist of five and we all went for an interview at Cambridge Aero Club – founded in 1909 by Molly Rose's brother. Each of us also had a 30-minute 'experience flight' to see how quickly we pick things up, as the winner would need to complete the licence within 45 hours of the scholarship.

Two days later, I discovered I'd won! My training started in



**Only 6% of pilots are women**

June and so far – at the time of writing in mid-August – I've done 30 flight hours, leaving 15 left for my licence. Basic lessons include climbing, descending, stalling and stall recoveries. Then you move on to taking off, flying a circuit and landing.

There's a navigation element too – flying to different places. It's been the most challenging part so far, as you have to do so much at the same time – talking on the radio, looking out of the aircraft, reading a map... You also have to sit nine ground school exams.

There have been a few challenging moments – like seeing a C-130 (a military transport plane) coming in and thinking, 'Right, I've got to get off this runway!'

By the time you read this, I'll have completed the licence. My ambition is to be a commercial pilot. Nowadays, when you go on holiday, it's normally two male pilots flying the plane and no one thinks anything of it. One day I want to fly an aircraft with another female pilot – and for that to be a completely normal occurrence. If male pilots can do it, why can't female pilots!

The scholarship includes mentoring from a woman pilot with Virgin Atlantic. I'm hoping to visit Virgin

Atlantic headquarters and make some helpful connections for the future.

I've read *Attagirls*, the novel about Molly Rose and women in the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA). And I've met some of Molly's relatives, like Lady Sybil Marshall. The way Lady Sybil spoke about Molly was amazing.

Only 6% of pilots are women, so it's important to ditch the stereotype that men are pilots, women are stewardesses. Girls need to think, 'Yeah I can do that!' I hope that when I become a commercial airline pilot, I'll also be a role model for girls in the future.

## Molly Rose

During World War II, Molly Rose (née Marshall) was a heroine aviatrix in the ATA, whose pilots ferried warplanes between factories, maintenance units and front-line squadrons. She was the inspiration for *Attagirls*, a novel by Paul Olavesen-Stabb of Aetheris Publishing – who then set up the scholarship to empower young women from all backgrounds to pursue a career in the male-dominated aviation industry. A film of *Attagirls* is also planned. For more, see [www.aetheris.co.uk](http://www.aetheris.co.uk).

