

Nischal Rana - Gliding Scholarship

During the summer of 2016, I had been fortunate enough to successfully obtain a week's worth of gliding from The Honourable Company of Air Pilots, at London Gliding Club (Dunstable).

Since young, I was captivated by the world of aviation. The main goal being, a commercial airline pilot. Before scouting for scholarships, I had not thought about gliding, as a power aircraft only came to mind. So when I found out that gliders can also get you airborne, it led me to my own research and enabled me to find this scholarship.



The process of achieving the scholarship was an exciting one, and receiving an email notifying that you were successful placed a big smile on my face. A sense of achievement to say the least.

As the week of gliding approached, I did not really know what to expect, as I had minimal knowledge, apart from the hundred plus YouTube videos that I had watched. London Gliding Club were kind enough to let me stay at their accommodation block, as travelling to and from home would equate to more than six hours' drive, daily.



the three instructors I had during the course, and another individual who had received the same scholarship as me. We were briefed on what we were going to do and all the safety precautions when operating on the airfield. Then, the fun part. We were taken to the gliders where we were shown how to inspect the gliders before and where the controls were situated. We were going to be flying the K-21 glider for the week.

My first flight consisted of us being aero towed instead of winch launched and as we got airborne, I cannot agree more to what my course friend mentioned after the first day. "It felt as if we were fighting the tug plane", mainly due to constantly tail gating



the tug aircraft until we reached our release height. When landing after the first flight, I was slightly confused as to what had happened. The fact that we were airborne for over eleven minutes with no power, had left me startled.

As the week progressed, so did we. We were taught more complicated controls and were allowed to fly more, when we were airborne. It was the second day, where we were introduced to a winch launch. I was the first to experience it and all I can say is that, when they said the acceleration from 0-60mph was around 3 seconds... They weren't kidding. It was something that I had not expected.

The amount of things I learnt from the week's course was amazing and invaluable. All the members which I had got to know were happy, friendly and full of helpful advice. Even though there was a lot to learn, the instructors were really patient which helped ease the learning phase. I would like to thank everyone at The Honourable Company of Air Pilots for allowing me to experience something I had not thought about and for guiding me at each step. Secondly, I would like to thank all of the members, instructors and Chief at the London Gliding Club, for the amazing hospitality and for the unforgettable opportunity. And last but not least, a person who I can call a friend after a week's worth of flying together, Jack. It made the week easier being able to do something that we both enjoyed and both had passion for.

The experience I received will truly be treasured and hopefully one day, I can return the favour.