

William Flynn - Gliding Scholarship 2017

During this summer I was lucky enough to take part in a Gliding course at Portsmouth Naval Gliding Centre. The scholarship given to me by the Honourable Company of Air Pilots allowed me to get many amazing flights and experience the fun of flying. With much practice over the course of the week I managed to achieve my first solo flight off of an aero tow.

When I first arrived in Portsmouth I was excited about the week to come and was hopeful the weather would hold out for us and we could get as much flying as possible. We first had some safety briefs and went to bed ready for the day of flying that was to come. The early mornings were definitely not a highlight of the week but none of us were complaining knowing that we would be spending the rest of the day in the air. On the first day I experienced a mixture of aero tows and winch launches, both of which I liked equally. The first thing that amazed



me in the air was the amazing view of the coast line we had. We could see all of the way to the Isle of White and were able to see miles land. Were very lucky on the first few days with the weather and averaged about five flights a day each.

After the first couple of days I felt as if I had improved greatly and was really driven to try and get my first solo flight. However, during the middle of the week we had an unfortunate cross wind which did not allow us to which as much. This was not too much of a problem because we focused on taking longer flights up to 2000 feet off the aero tow. During these long mid week flights I had the opportunity to fly with an aerobatics instructor and was thrilled by the manoeuvres such as cubin eights that we did. I also had the chance to try a loop myself! As well as doing that, I had the very different experience of flying a gypsy moth with a club member. The loud propeller and wind in my face was very different from the gliding yet equally as enjoyable.

By the last few days I was happy with all of the flying I had done and was confident with my take offs and landings. On the last night I was eagerly looking at the weather to see if I would have the opportunity to fly by myself. Come the morning I was still unsure but after a couple more flights my instructor left me in the glider. It was a bit of a shaky take of because of my nerves but I flew up to 15000 feet and

released the cable. Being on my own in the sky was amazing but at the time I was focused on getting down safely.

It was an amazing week where I learnt to get up early and work as a team to get the gliders out quickly. This enabled us to have as many flights as possible. As well as this I loved helping set up the gliders for the rest of the team and had an amazing time in the air myself. Having had the memorable experience flying for a week I have continued to fly and have been to my local club to go up in the air again. I am really excited about flying in the future and would love a job as a pilot.

William Flynn