

Stephen Daly - Gliding Scholarship

I'm not too sure how to express how grateful I am, but even if I could, words would not justify it. From the most sincere part of me, thank you so much for giving me this opportunity to meet such wonderful people in diverse fields of aviation, and also, to share my experiences with five of the



nicest people I could imagine.

I found out about this scholarship when I was on work experience in a flight school, on “Pilot Careers Live” webpage. Immediately, I bookmarked the link and hastily began my application form, once I had come home. After the interview, I was thrilled to be informed by email, that I was successful. Prior to the start date, we decided to make a group chat, to make our first interactions a little less awkward!

Gliding is something that I haven't had the chance to be exposed to, since there are only 2 gliding clubs in Ireland (the nearest of which, is 3 hours away from me). So to say I was excited, was an understatement! David briefed us the night before on what the winch launch was going to entail, but 60 mph in 2.8 seconds was just words when he explained the process... I must say that it caught me off guard! Climbing at 45° and accelerating faster than a formula one car, my head was still on the ground by the time we released at 1,200ft. My brain struggled to process what was going on, but I relished every moment of it!

Staying with five other guys, who are immersed into aviation as much as I am, definitely helped my ability to learn and retain information much quicker, as we embraced our passion for flying. David invited guests every night for dinner, who had careers in almost every aviation sector you could think of. So not only were we learning how to fly, but we were getting advice from the people who started off their aviation adventure just like us.



When I was there, it was easy to take the week for granted, but now, since I am home, I truly appreciate the value of the course that The Honourable Company of Air Pilots have facilitated for me. The week taught me to refine various disciplines that, otherwise, would not have been possible. The first one that immediately comes to mind, is teamwork. There's an old saying that my teacher always recites, "Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success". I cannot find another quote that is as relevant as this, that sums up the whole week. From getting up in the morning at 6 AM, to pulling out the ASK-21's out of the hangar, to holding the gliders

wings level, we all had to rely on each other to deliver the highest standards of safety. There were mornings where we truly understood that there are two 6 o'clocks in one day, but we kept applying ourselves to the best of our ability.

There is one profound development in my character, that I believe has exceeded my expectations, and that is confidence. If someone was to tell me at eight, that I would be flying solo before I could drive, I wouldn't have believed them. But when my instructor Chris, said, "right, are you ready to go on your own?", I was not phased. That moment when I released the cable at 1500ft, and I looked over my shoulder to see Chris not in the back, is something I will remember for the rest of my life.

The final day involved some last flights in the ASK-21's, while also preparing for the guests to come later on in the day. Fortunately, I managed to fit in another solo flight! One of the instructors, Graham, decided to treat me with one aerobatic flight! From Half Clovers, to Cuban Eights, we put the glider to it's maximum limits. And yes, the names of the maneuvers are as daunting as they physically are! Reaching the peak of a loop, while looking out inverted, was a moment of sheer bliss. We pulled +5G, -1G.

I met so many influential people at the club, from Peter Benn to Dave Durston. I am truly grateful to everyone involved, in making my dream job one step closer! Furthermore, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my sponsor for funding the week.

