

Honourable Company Of Air Pilots Gliding Scholarship 2017

London Gliding Club, Dunstable

Oliver Williams

I applied for an Honourable Company of Air Pilots gliding scholarship early in 2017. The application form was quite straightforward and I was very pleased when I was invited to attend an interview at the HCAP offices in London. This was the most worrying stage for me but after a minute or two, I realised I should just relax and be myself.

From there on the interview seemed to go well as we discussed my interests and career plans. I am hoping to study aeronautical engineering at university and knowing how to fly aircraft will definitely help when



building them. I have already built several drones and model aircraft so I am learning all the time. I expected to wait a few days to hear whether I had been awarded a gliding scholarship but was delighted to receive an email the very next day to let me know that I had been successful.



My gliding scholarship was scheduled to take place at the London Gliding Club (LGC) near Dunstable from 14 – 18 August. On arrival at the Club I met Holly, who had also been awarded an HCAP scholarship, and our instructor for the week, Trevor. Holly and I were

shown our on-site accommodation before a briefing session where Trevor assessed how much flying we had already done and what to focus on throughout the week. I was issued with a gliding logbook to record my flights and we were shown the glider we would use for the week – an ASK-21, registration G-CKEJ.

I had done a couple of previous glider flights – one at Lee-on-Solent in an ASK-21 and one at RAF Syerston during an Air Cadet aerospace camp. Both of these were using an aero-tow so I knew roughly what to expect.



On the first day I completed three flights on aero-tow using a Robin 180 tug plane. I spent over an hour in the air that day practising general handling, thermalling, turning, speed control and landing. When I wasn't flying I helped retrieve gliders from the landing area. I was very tired by the end of the day!



The next day we started using a winch to launch the glider. Accelerating from stationary to around 80 knots in a few seconds was amazing but I soon got used to it. We used the winch for the rest of the scholarship time and each day developed our gliding skills

further. We were very lucky as the weather for the whole week was good and I was able to fly every day. Trevor had planned to cover spinning and stalling on

the final day but the cloud base was too low. We needed a minimum of 4,000 feet for these exercises.

By the end of the week I had completed 20 launches and over 6 hours of gliding. The whole scholarship was fantastic and I am incredibly grateful to the Air Safety Trust who kindly financed my HCAP gliding course at LGC. Trevor was a great instructor and everyone at Dunstable welcomed Holly and I



warmly to their Gliding Club. I hope that I can return to LGC again in the future to continue working towards my first solo flight.