

Veronica Mormol The AFG Scholarship

The initial drive up the steep hill to the Midland Gliding Club set the tone for the rest of the week of the gliding scholarship – challenging, occasionally nerve-wracking but most of all fun. The six days spent gliding at the Mynd were extremely valuable to me both in terms of developing my flying skills, and in furthering transferable skills such as leadership and communication.



Immediately on arrival we met with the other winners of the scholarships and were thrown into the deep end. We went up to the south end of the airfield and were introduced to the basics of hooking gliders onto the cable and running the wings, during which everyone was very friendly and understanding. Our instructors, Dave Crowson and Neal Clements, briefed us each morning in detail, and took the time to explain any new concepts to us.

We were involved heavily with the setting up of the launch point in the morning. This included unpacking the hangar, towing the gliders and helping with the daily inspection of the gliders.

Luck was on our side, as we only had one day of bad weather. However, we took this opportunity to practice cable breaks on the simulator, as well as circuits with the help of Neal, which made things easier when actually flying in the following days. We also managed to practice about 3 approaches each in the motor glider the same afternoon, which reinforced our newly learnt skills.



During the course I flew with Dave, who helped me improve very quickly. After refreshing the basic principles of flight, we focused on coordinated turns, which I practiced (and struggled with) by doing figure of eight turns. I found it quite difficult to focus on my attitude and lookout without fixating on the airspeed indicator, but I felt I mostly resolved this issue towards the end of the week. A highlight for me was



when he was demonstrating an overshoot on landing, and flew over the edge of the airfield and along the ridge at a low height – which as I found out later was called ridge running. Not many clubs have a ridge where this is possible, so I was extremely happy that I got the chance to do this.

Another unique experience was flying in the T21 with Roger Andrews. Having the wind blowing on my face constantly was definitely interesting, but also exciting. Other than this, I was flying K13s, and managed to get fifteen winch launches and around four and a half hours of gliding total, including the motor glider, which I was very pleased about.



Overall, the course was an incredible six days, and I would like to thank the Honourable Company of Air Pilots for offering me this incredible opportunity. I will remember the experience forever, and I'm sure it will benefit me greatly when flying or gliding in the future.