

AST Gliding Scholarship - Owen Shepherd

My name is Owen Shepherd, and in 2025 I was privileged enough to be selected for the Honourable Company of Air Pilots Scholarship Scheme. After a competitive selection process and a formal interview which I was given approval to leave school for in April, I was delighted to receive an email stating that I had been selected for the scholarship. The scholarship was fixed for the end of July and I was excited to begin!

Jumping forwards a few months, I arrived at Midland Gliding Club. After a long journey from Southampton where I'm from I was over the moon to have finally arrived. Immediately, I was escorted out to the airfield where I met the people I would be completing my scholarship with that week.



Despite having one out of five days rained off, I was trained in both theory and practical assessments:

Theory:

- Look out and scan cycle
- Basic principles of Flight
- Use of Airbrakes and Approach control

- Circuit planning
- Winch launching

Practical flying exercises:

- Handing over control
- Pre flight checks
- Use of Elevator
- Use of Ailerons
- Use of Rudder
- Effects of Adverse Yaw
- Straight glide
- Trimming
- ASI and speed monitoring
- Coordination of controls
- Slip and skid
- Maintaining a heading
- Turning
- Rolling out on a heading
- Air brake and elevator coordination
- Normal approach
- Dealing with an undershoot
- Crosswind approach
- Round out
- Hold off
- Ground run (Landing)
- Ground run (Launch)
- Rotation and initial climb
- Full climb
- Level and release

I am extremely happy with my achievements over the week and also received many follow up and personal advice from my instructors on the course. The instructors were incredible, experienced, willing and able to help and support us on the course.

One of my highlights was being trusted to fly the entire launch, search for thermals, circuit, approach and landing, all whilst under crosswind conditions. I think this is one of my biggest achievements that I have ever had and cannot express my gratitude for everyone who has enabled me to have this experience. I am pictured landing the glider below.

I strongly recommend applying for a scholarship to anyone with a similar



passion for aviation. I feel extremely privileged that the Honourable Company of Air Pilots have supported me to make my dream of flying and gliding come true.

This entire experience was a different world. To be brought into the world of Gliding in such a smooth, progressive way has been incredible for me. This scholarship has given me a hobby that I will keep up for life, and also an incredible stepping stone to build off of as I chase my career goals as a commercial airline pilot.

I honestly cannot thank both the Honourable Company of Air Pilots and the Staff at Midland Gliding Club for what they have provided me through this scholarship.

