

Shiv Sheth

The Air Pilots Flying Club Gliding scholarship.



Since the age of 5, I have had a passion for aviation and dreamed of flying. For my 14th birthday, my mum gifted me a trial glider flight with a temporary membership at East Sussex Gliding Club, which started my pursuit of learning to fly and many weekends volunteering at the club. During my membership, we were encouraged to seek and apply for gliding scholarships so after doing some research, I found and applied for this one with the Honourable Company of Air Pilots (HCAP) to develop my glider training. I wasn't at all sure if my application would be successful and even though the interview was friendly and relaxed, I knew the competition would be high. So, when I received the email offer, I was ecstatic, it was an amazing feeling...almost as good as flying! I learned to believe in myself, my passion for learning and that no matter what, it's always worth pursuing my ambitions.

We were given the possibility of a few dates and gliding clubs, so I requested to be placed at London Gliding Club(LGC) as it is closest to me. LGC is in Dunstable, near Luton, and is set beside a ridge. It is a large and busy club, open 7 days a week, with a cafe for people to come and eat. Our accommodation was extremely comfortable, and 4 out of the 6 of us even had rooms to ourselves.

Our daily schedule was to wake up at around 7:30, have breakfast from 8-8:30, help to bring the gliders out of the hangar, the parachutes out of the shed and shadow the instructors whilst they conducted the daily inspection. Then start the first half of our flying day would start with a break for lunch in the café before 13.00 . Afternoon flying would continue until 6pm, but I often stayed until later to help out with evening flying too.

On the first day, due to rain we were unable to fly, but we did get some practice on the simulator and had most of our briefings, like pre-flight ABCDE and CB SIFT BEC checks, whilst getting to know each other. We also learnt how to drive the buggies and went to have a look at the gliders we would be flying (the K21). On Tuesday we all woke up eager to fly, I started the day with an aerotow where I practiced co-ordinated controls and turns in high winds. There was a lot of ridge lift, so I was able to practice a bit of soaring in a congested area. Although, the glider alarm would sound often with loud beeping which made flying in the area even more intense, as it made me think I was about to crash despite constantly looking out before turns and in general. On Wednesday I began winch launches. My instructor Mark began teaching me the approach and I flew 5 winch launches. That day there was evening flying too so myself and another pupil(Malachi) helped until 20:30, retrieving gliders. Thursday included me starting to use the airbrakes on approach, doing the roundout and then the full landing through 3 winches.



Finally, on Friday I learned the full winch launch, did a bit of soaring and flew the whole circuit on the last flight with an unplanned landing, as we were too low to land on the main runway due to heavy sink which we flew the top of our winch conditions, there were paragliders which were a

on our approach, with Mark taking control once to one flying towards us! After my final 4 winches we were certificates from the HCAP, and we took some group is very exhilarating, and it is definitely my preferred

When we weren't flying, there was plenty to do in the run the winch and aerotow launch points, how to attach the 'ALL CLEAR ABOVE AND BEHIND' 'TAKE UP SLACK' and drive the buggies and retrieve gliders. In the playing games and walking around the airfield and we on one of the evenings.



didn't expect. On my first straight into a thermal off launch. Due to the large numbers of challenge to manoeuvre prevent a collision with presented with our photos. The winch launch launch method.

field. We learned how to the gliders to the cables, and 'ALL OUT' commands evenings we relaxed, even went into Dunstable

During the week I made some good friends and everyone in our group got on well. It was such an enriching experience in so many ways and has deepened my motivation to pursue gliding and aviation as a long-term career. I'd like to thank my instructor Mark for his patience and guidance, the Air Pilots Flying Club for sponsoring me and everyone who helped make this experience possible.