

Gliding Scholarship Report- Ruhma Binoy

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Honourable Company of Air Pilots, the Air Safety Trust, and the Derbyshire and Lancashire Gliding Club for awarding me this scholarship, sponsoring my training, and giving me the opportunity to learn and develop my skills through this experience.

I first heard about the Honourable Company of Air Pilots through an officer in the RAF Air Cadets, which led to me eventually applying for the scholarship two years later. When I received the email from Angie saying that I had been invited to an interview, it felt surreal. Although I thought the interview didn't go as well as it could have, I was awarded a place on the course by the grace of God!

After a two-hour drive to the Derbyshire and Lancashire Gliding Club, I was greeted warmly by Hans, who was one of the gliding instructors on the course, and shown to my room. I met my course mates and had a quick briefing about the course from Alan, who was my gliding instructor. We were then shown around the hangar and airfield. Towards the evening, a club member named Colin taught us how to drive a tractor, which was something I was not expecting but was nonetheless very grateful for!

Over the course of the week, we helped unpack the gliders from the hangar each morning and tow them to the launch points. The weather was quite varied throughout the week, with both cloudy and sunny days, as well as different wind directions. This allowed us to use different launch points across the airfield. We had the opportunity to fly in the Puchacz throughout the week, and Alan was extremely gracious in adapting my responsibilities during the flights according to my skills and experience. He also allowed me to remain in control for most of the flight, which really increased my confidence in using the instruments and controls, as well as carrying out the various manoeuvres.

Towards the end of one of my flights, Alan started asking me to lose altitude and increase my speed. This scared me at the time, as I realised that I would be landing the aircraft by myself for the first time! However, he guided me through it really well, and we're still alive! A couple of flights later, he also let me be in control during the launches.

I amassed 2 hours 58 minutes of flight time across 14 launches and Alan helped me go from just being able to bank right and left to doing stall recoveries, launches and landings on my own!! (Although the hilly airfield was intimidating)

On lucky days we would circle thermals and use the famous ridge to gain altitude. One really lucky day when we got up to about 3000 feet, Alan played ABBA in the glider which was incredible!

When we were not gliding we were helping log flights, running with the wing tip, signaling to the winch drivers and retrieving gliders using the tractors!! I also got to speak to many amazing club members like Liz, Colin, Bob, Dave and learnt so much from their experience.

After each day we would be cooked delicious meals by Sylvia and John at the club and we would fill in our logbooks with our instructors, play card games and watch movies whilst waiting for dinner.



Overall I had a fantastic week with Derbyshire & Lancashire Gliding Club where I learned so many new skills and kindled a love for aviation and I Thank God, The Honourable Company Of Air Pilots and the Air Safety Trust for making my dream come true!

Ruhma Binoy

