

Nicole Farcas | Gliding Report

Red Arrows Trust 2024

In the last week of July, I was fortunate to have attended a gliding scholarship with the Honourable Company of Air Pilots, sponsored by the Red Arrows Trust. Taking place at Midland Gliding Club over the Long Mynd, we were trained to help keep the airfield running smoothly, controlling the retrieve winch, hooking on the weak link, 'wing running' and so much more; and that was only on the ground!

At the beginning of the week, we started with a recap of controlling the glider, coordinating controls, and starting on approaches for landing. We were all keen to try out the flight simulator once we headed inside, and that helped us to get an idea of how to control the glider in the air.



On the first day of the scholarship, the weather was the greatest it would be all week. Some of us had flights that lasted up to an hour with the thermals that we caught; I managed to reach over 3,000 ft in just a single thermal!

As we got more confident, we started doing full circuits with solo landings and solo winch launches. We also got to practice different scenarios that can happen in the air. I really enjoyed practicing different types of stalls, like the nose drop, the mushing stall and the wing drop stall. I also had practice with misaligned approaches, making small adjustments on the approach



and learning what to do if my altitude was too high or too low. We each had a go in the motor glider at the club, which was particularly helpful when practicing different scenarios on the approach. On the last day of the scholarship, there was a moderate crosswind when we were landing, which we certainly used to our advantage for our learning.

This week was most certainly one of the best highlights of my life; spending a week with an awesome group of people and amazing instructors really helped. The Long Mynd was a

beautiful place to go gliding, and the staff at Midland Gliding Club were the best. I had originally applied for the scholarship after going gliding with the RAF Air Cadets a few years ago as I loved how gliding felt for me at the time. I enjoyed the serenity and the beautiful views, even though the weather was not amazing when I first went. However, this scholarship has inspired me to continue this as a hobby and as a sport. This scholarship week remarkably progressed not just my gliding skills, but on-ground skills that we learned on the airfield. These are skills that the instructors marked off in our logbooks and can be taken with us whenever we go gliding again. I am indebted to the Air Pilots, the Red Arrows Trust and the instructors at MGC; they have changed my life within the course of a week.

