

Tomasz Malcom

I attended the Honourable Company Of Air Pilots gliding scholarship at the Derbyshire and Lancashire gliding club from 5th - 9th August 2019. I made my way to the local railway station at Hathersage and was met by Shirley from the gliding club, who took me down to the gliding airfield. The facilities at the club were fantastic and on the first evening I made myself at home and got to meet my course mates. We instantly became firm friends, as we spent the evening playing pool and cards and talking about flying and our plans to become pilots.

On our first morning we had breakfast and met our instructors. Our Instructors showed us the basics of flying gliders and took us into the simulator, to begin our instruction in effects of controls. After some time practicing in the simulator we all went out to the airfield for our first flights. I found my first launch a little bit frightening because I had never flown a glider before, but once we released the winch cable I quickly settled into it. After my first few flights I forgot my nerves and found that flying a glider is really great fun. The views from the cockpit are absolutely amazing.

As the days went by I learned more and more on how to fly a glider and got better at it. My instructor Pete was a very good instructor and a very nice guy. I really enjoyed flying with him. To begin with I found selecting the right attitude difficult, but Pete was really patient and helped me get it right, this meant my speed control got better as time went on. I also had to get to grips with positioning the glider so that i was always in the right place to land. This was difficult, but again, iimproved with practice. By the end of the week I was flying the entire flight including my own take offs and landings.

When we weren't flying we were assisting with the launches and recoveries of the gliders for the rest of the team. This made the days very busy and active, but great fun. During the lunch breaks we had nice conversations with the rest of the team learning about their lives and flying experiences, which was really interesting. To get most from good weather the days were quite long so I appreciated the delicious dinner and i thought it was amazing that we got given a menu with a choice of what food to order.

We lost one day due to bad weather, but even so, I did a total of 15 launches. I want to use the scholarship experience as a start, and continue to progress in order to try and fly my first solo sometime. I plan on joining my local gliding club so I can make that happen.

So what did i get from the Scholarship?

I made the first steps in learning to fly. More than that, I got to work as part of an amazing team, and in doing so have developed new skills from the new experience. I've made friends for life and even now, weeks later, we're still in daily contact and dream of flying together again one day.

I'd like to thank The Honourable Company Of Air Pilots for offering this amazing scholarship andalso thank Pete for teaching me how to fly and everyone at the Derbyshire and Lancashire gliding club for looking after and supporting us. It was fantastic.