

Abbie Haylock

Air Pilots Flying Club (Gliding) Scholarship

"Midland Winch, all clear above and behind, take up slack." This is the technical instruction the wing-runner must communicate to the winch-driver ready for a safe winch take-off. This is one of many responsibilities, skills and disciplines I gained which increased in depth over the 5 days, while ensuring safety balanced with fun remained the highest priority throughout the course. A fully packed week, complimented with delicious meals kept me going; each morning my instructors, Alan and Dave presented informative briefings to all members of the club covering knowledge on wind speed, wind direction and flight circuits to ensure that everyone knew how the day was going to operate.



Throughout the week, I also learnt how the club operates on the ground. There was always a job to keep you busy, from retrieving gliders as soon as they landed, running the wing, filling out the log book (a legal document that must be completed correctly) to attaching winch cables to gliders in preparation for take-off. Fortunately, the weather was pleasant everyday other than one, so I managed to launch 17 times and glide 5 hours 42 minutes over the 4 days. Within this time, I practiced turning, thermalling, trimming and exciting stalling exercises including spinning, high-speed stalls, nose and wing drops and spiral dives. After practicing these exercises a few times, I grew in confidence and enjoyed the challenge of controlling and recovering the glider from a stall. As a reward, Alan even treated me to a loop-the-loop which was fantastic! Poor weather day, the team and I covered the theory and applied this knowledge in the simulator... again, plenty of fun!

There were many pre-flight checks including the daily inspection and the glider pilots' 'CB-SIFT-BEC' to ensure a safe flight; the instructors thoroughly educated me on the importance of these checks and were ultimately fun and brilliant demonstrators.

I would like to thank the Honourable Company of Air Pilots, the donors and the instructors at the beautiful location in Shropshire, for not only awarding me a fantastic scholarship, but for confirming my aspiration of becoming a pilot and creating memories with new friends that I will forever cherish.

