

Midland Gliding Club Scholarship Week

My flying experience began through Air Cadets, where I have been lucky enough to experience two powered flights so far in my three years since joining. This set in motion my love for flying and aviation as a whole and was ultimately what led me to apply for the scholarship. Having worked hard on my application and interview, the news that I had been selected for the course was amazing, and I was beyond excited to begin.

During my week at Midland Gliding Club, I spent my time helping in every aspect of the club – from launching and retrieving gliders to logging flights, and of course, flying. I found the club to be an amazing environment that supported me on every step, with a huge social atmosphere and great instructors who never failed to thoroughly help me understand the things we were doing.

When I arrived on the Sunday, I was taken straight out to the airfield to be introduced to the procedures used around the launch point and was lucky enough to get the last flight of the day, giving me a great start to the week. From the moment I arrived, it was obvious that the standards expected from everyone involved were very high. The staff expect you to pay attention throughout the day and follow their instructions clearly - this can make for a tiring course, as there is little opportunity for relaxation until the evening. However, it also means that the progress you make - both in your flying and your skills on the ground – is extremely fast, and I was surprised by the amount of knowledge I gained in the first few days. For example, we did briefings most nights, and progressed quickly through flying techniques, starting with the coordinated use of controls, before moving on to

correct launch technique, and checklists for pre-flight and aerobatics. Within a couple of days, we were practicing all components of the circuit and flying our own approaches and landings, something I was very proud of achieving.

Although the first few days were tiring, I eventually settled into the rhythm of life on the airfield, and a big part of that was the evenings – we had to have the gliders packed away by 5.30, but after that we were given the rest of the evening to spend as we liked. Most nights we would kick a football around or spend our time on the flight sim practicing circuits and landings, however the social atmosphere made every activity enjoyable and I was lucky to have a great group of friends while I was there, despite having never met any of them before.

One of my highlights of the week's flying was performing loops a few days in, prompted by great weather and thermals. The experience was one I doubt I'll ever forget and made me even more thankful for the experiences this scholarship gave me – experiencing the G-forces was an incredible rush, and being allowed to perform a loop myself really furthered my feel for the aircraft and its capabilities.

Overall, the scholarship was an amazing opportunity for me to begin my aviation journey, as well as helping me connect with a range of new people. It provided fantastic memories that will undoubtedly stay with me forever, as well as some great photos – the instructors were more than happy for us to capture some views from the air, and I'm glad I did. Following on from this course, I hope to continue building my hours in gliders, with the potential goal of a sailplane license. Additionally, my initial flights with cadets, as well as the experiences of this scholarship, have solidified my hope of earning a PPL

scholarship, which would hopefully propel a career into commercial or military aviation as a pilot.

For now though, I am immensely grateful to all the staff and members at Midland Gliding Club, as well as the Honourable Company of Air Pilots and my sponsor David Burns, director of the Flyer Watch Company, for their part in the incredible week I have had, and highly recommend anyone with an interest in aviation and flying to apply for next year's scholarships.