

Olivia Galik – PM Dorothy Saul Pooley Scholarship

Earlier this year, I was given the amazing opportunity to take part in a week-long gliding scholarship at Derby and Lincs gliding club. The course was designed to take people aged 16+ with little or no previous experience and train them up to a level where they would be ready to fly solo. Over the course of seven days, I was fully immersed in the world of gliding, learning both in the air and on the ground and making huge progress each day towards reaching a solo standard.

Each morning started with a weather and safety briefing, where we discussed the day's conditions, the flying plan, and any important notices. From there, we would head to the hangar and safely manoeuvre gliders out of the hangar, one by one, it was an impressive skill



I learnt. We would head out to the launch point to begin the day's flying. Weather permitting, we were flying multiple times a day, however on the first day this wasn't the case. However, from the very first flight I was in the cockpit with my instructor, hands on the controls, learning how to manage the glider in the air.

Throughout the week, I was trained in a wide range of essential flying skills from basic handling and turning, to coordinated flight, circuit planning, and landing and launching techniques. I was also introduced to winch launching, which was a completely thrilling experience. At first, it was a lot to take in, but with each flight I gained more confidence and a better understanding of how the glider responded.

In addition to the practical flying, we also attended theory sessions when the weather wasn't great, covering subjects like air law, meteorology, flight theory, and safety procedures. These lessons helped give context to what we were learning in the air, and really reinforced how much responsibility comes with flying. I came away from the course with a much deeper appreciation of how important preparation, awareness, and decision-making are in aviation.

Reaching solo standard in just a week is no small challenge, and while I didn't go solo by the end of the course, I was well on the way. The instructors gave me detailed feedback and helped me focus on the final few skills I needed to refine before taking that next big step. It was incredibly motivating to see how far I'd come in just a short time, and to know that solo flight was within reach.



There were definitely a few challenges along the way, especially adjusting to the physical and mental demands of flying multiple times a day. The weather was another unpredictable factor, with some days bringing delays or limited flight time. But despite these, the experience remained consistently engaging and rewarding.

Looking back, the gliding scholarship was one of the best things I've ever done. It pushed me



outside my comfort zone, taught me new skills, and opened my eyes to what's possible in aviation. I would highly recommend this opportunity to anyone interested in flying! Whether you've dreamed of becoming a pilot, or you're just curious to try something new. DO IT! The training, the friends you make, the atmosphere, and the sense of achievement make it a truly unforgettable experience.



The scholarship was just the beginning of what I hope will be a long and exciting journey in gliding. So what are you waiting for? Apply! If you don't try, the answer will always be no!