

Gliding Scholarship 2026

When I first applied for the gliding scholarship with the Honourable Company of Air Pilots I had never been up in a glider or even seen one! I hope that this report about my week at the Derbyshire and Lancashire gliding club will not only give you an insight to what the week is like but also give you that final push to put that application in.

Being from Belfast, I understood that it was going to be a long journey to get there but I knew it was going to be very much worth it. On the very first day we got settled into each of our rooms, and after getting a house tour by one of our hosts Sylvia, we did not let a moment go to waste! We immediately got to work figuring out how to drive the tractors, as this is an essential part of gliding (the glider won't bring itself to the launch point!)



this then gave us the skill to be able to retrieve the gliders ourselves when it came to our flights. That night we chose our dinner from a menu that was given to us with plenty of options which was prepared by John, (who did not disappoint!)

The second day, we started learning to glide! We started early getting breakfast at 8am to be up and get the gliders out of the hanger at 9. I got my very first flight ever in a glider and from that moment I knew I was hooked! From start to finish it was nonstop as we soon learnt gliding is a team sport, and if you sat doing nothing at any moment someone is probably looking for you!





Unfortunately come Thursday, tragedy struck, a very rainy day left us stranded inside, however, that did not mean we could afford to lose a day of learning. We went into the classroom and one instructor, Pete, shared some of his knowledge on hill soaring and our other instructor, Alan, took us into the flight sim room where we were able to apply our knowledge about circuits digitally.

Finally, our last day came and we went up to the launch point one last time, it was arguable our best day of all because we each got 4 – 5 launches and we applied all of our knowledge from the week to the point we were taking off, gliding and landing all by ourselves with our instructor only giving occasional prompts! We were also honoured to be joined by past master of the honourable company of air pilots Robin Keegan, to present our certificates for completing the weeklong course, and even finding out who sponsored us and made our journey possible.



To conclude the week was one of the best experiences I have ever done and with one of the best group of people I could ask to have done it with. If I were to give one piece of advice to anyone going on or thinking of applying to this course, it would be to find your local gliding club and look into it, or even research about the theory of gliders, as if you are coming to one of these courses with some experience you could possibly even go solo if you work hard enough! Thank you to the air pilots who gave me this opportunity and introduced me to the world of gliding which I will most definitely continue to pursue.

