

Gliding Scholarship 2024

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Since finding out about the Gliding Scholarship scheme that the Honourable Company of Air Pilots offer, I was heartset on pursuing such an exciting experience. When I got the confirmation email stating the interview stage of the application process had been a success, it truly felt as though I was taking my first steps towards my future aspiration of being a pilot. This excitement didn't settle over the following months preceding the course: the thought of the approaching experience was a constant in my mind. When August 4th came around, I was still in disbelief that I was actually going to spend that week learning to fly.



The time I spent at Midland Gliding Club (MGC) was incredibly enriching: filled with insightful theory lessons and exhilarating time spent airborne. Aiming to help candidates progress as much as possible during the course timeframe, the instructors tirelessly worked to develop and refine our skills, and offer us as much flight time as possible. Furthermore, the course was also a valuable opportunity to learn the roles on an airfield: meaning successful candidates learnt everything from wing-running to retrieve winch-operating, further emphasising the breadth of what Air Pilots can offer from their scholarships.

One of the most thrilling moments of the week was the first time I landed the glider, I had developed a streak of miscoordination when attempting to land. My instructor patiently gave me opportunity after opportunity to practise missed approaches (where you come into land to practise coordinating your instruments, but you don't quite land, and regain altitude to enable you to continue the flight) so that, when it came to the point I was actually landing, I managed to bring us in safely and independently: a truly pinnacle moment of my experience on the course, as I'd overcome the mental block previously withholding my progress.



Moreover, the people I befriended during the course were wonderful, it was a brilliant opportunity to talk about topics we were all heavily invested in, such as aviation, but also just to make connections with like-minded and aspirational individuals, who I am still speaking to regularly, and hope to see again in the near future.

To try and summarise the experience of the Air Pilots' Gliding Scholarship is a difficult feat, as it was genuinely a shaping and defining experience, and a wonderful first taste of being an aviator. I cannot wait to pursue further opportunities with the Air Pilots, whose incentives enrich the lives of so many young and ambitious people. I cannot thank them enough, nor my sponsor at the Air Pilots Flying Club, for their generosity.