

# Charlie Bode Gliding Scholarship Report

My name is Charlie Bode, and since a young age I have always dreamed of being a pilot, and the opportunity that the Air Pilots organisation have provided myself and many others with is truly once in a lifetime.

My scholarship took place at Derbyshire and Lancashire Gliding Club, near to the town of Buxton. The airfield was a very open field atop a 1350 hill, giving us an incredible view of the surrounding area on clear days. This also meant that there was a relatively strong wind of 20kts on most days, producing lots of ridge lift allowing us to stay in the air for long periods of time.

Upon our arrival at the club, we were greeted by our two fantastic hosts, John and Sylvia, who showed us to our rooms, which were rather cozy, yet cleaned to an extremely good standard, making it feel rather homely.



After getting settled in, we sat down to eat our dinner, cooked by John himself. The food went down extremely well with everyone, and Sylvia had baked a chocolate brownie for dessert.



Unfortunately, the next day the weather meant that flying would not be possible. Instead, we were shown some of the tractors used to retrieve

the gliders, which were incredibly fun to drive, and how to retrieve a glider that had just landed. We then looked inside the hangar at the gliders we would be flying come better weather.



Afterwards, we spent the afternoon practicing our basic glider handling on the club's very own flight simulator, giving some of the gliding scholars their first insight into glider handling.



*On the left is the hangar of gliders belonging to the club. G-CJRJ, pictured in the right-hand side of the frame, is one of the gliders we would be piloting in the coming days.)*



*On the right is Adam, another scholar, practicing on the simulator.*



In the coming days the weather was very hit and miss. The weather finally settled on the third day for us to take the gliders out of the hangar and fly.

Pictured here is the Puchacz gliders that we would be learning in. we were shown how to properly handle the gliders, and soon after we would finally make our way to the launch point and begin gliding. The weather was rather windy, however despite this, the rain stayed away for most of the day. Other than a few showers, there was near continuous flying, giving the scholars the opportunity to experience flying a glider for the first time, whilst also learning more basic handling, and putting the practice we had on the simulators into real life.

Retrieving the gliders was almost as enjoyable as flying them. With many of the scholars being from fairly urban areas with little to do with vehicles like tractors and John Deere Gators, driving a tractor for the first time was extremely fun, as the job required a lot of observations about when a glider would come to land. Alongside this, we were also told that the faster we retrieved a glider, the faster we would be able to fly. This created a challenge as to who could retrieve the glider the quickest (whilst also remaining safe of course).

On the days where the weather was too poor to fly, we received a mixture of ground-based simulator training, and lesson on how a glider flies, as well as stalling and the different types of lift a glider can use to gain altitude. The lessons were delivered by one of our instructors, Pete, who had an enormous wealth of knowledge which he shared with us.

Unfortunately, due to the poor weather, none of us were able to fly solo by the end of the week, however I believe that with more training, each of the scholars would be able to reach a solo standard in a short period of time.

On the final day of our scholarship, we met some of the members of the Honourable Company of Air Pilots, including the Master of the company. We were presented with our certificates after the day of gliding had finished and talked with them about the company itself.

Throughout the week, the six of us scholars bonded and became good friends, and we all stay in contact with each other. Despite being from opposite sides of the country, we all found common interests, and continue to bond online.



I am extremely grateful to the people at the Honourable Company of Air Pilots who have provided us with this opportunity, and since completing my scholarship, I have continued with my passion for aviation, and have applied to become a Royal Navy Pilot.

My thanks go out to the two instructors, Alan and Pete, who provided us with the training we needed for the week, and also helped to keep us safe whilst out on the airfield. Sylvia and John were excellent hosts, providing us with all the things we needed throughout the week, including incredible food and great accommodation. All the members of the club were very welcoming, and answered any questions we had about gliding, or just the club in general.

I would certainly recommend this scholarship to anyone interested in aviation, as it has truly been the experience of a lifetime and has been extremely insightful and enjoyable.