

Ayrik Jahedi
August 2025 – Midlands Gliding Club
HCAP Air Pilots Visit Gliding Scholarship

It was a great 5 days in Midlands Gliding Club doing some gliding as part of my 5-day gliding scholarship over the summer break – it's just a shame that I wasn't there for longer!

When we arrived, we were given our room keys and waited for all participants to arrive on site. We were toured around the site, including the launch pad, and briefed about how much effort it really takes to get 1 glider up in the air. You'd need 1 person directing the launch, 1 person running the wing, 1 person on the main winch, 1 person on the launch pad, and another person to fetch the glider with a buggy when it lands. We were briefed on how to carry out all of these tasks in preparation for the next few days – it was then that we discovered that gliding isn't entirely about flying one, but getting one up in the air in the first place. We were then briefed on the checks required before takeoff (CBSIFT BEC), alongside an introduction operating the controls around Longmynd. Afterwards, we did some flying in the sims and then enjoyed our dinner in preparation for the first day of flying.

The Monday was a very wet day, we couldn't do much but wait for the rain to die down until after we had lunch – but, nevertheless, we utilised this opportunity to do as many briefs as possible, including circuit & MET briefs, along a lot of time spent on the simulator. Luckily, the weather cleared out, and we did our first flight! We adjusted to the ridge alongside introductions to coordinated turns and thermals – it's quite an achievement for our first flight to be during Storm Floris!

The Tuesday was all about making sure we're 100% comfortable with how to operate the aircraft and how to operate everything on the ground as well. In turn, I had 3 flights, all around 30-40 minutes each, learning about the effects of adverse yaw, stalling, and then going into territory related to circuits and carrying out a winch launch by yourself. I don't think I could ever get used to the sheer speed with which the winch launch gets the glider up in the air!

The Wednesday was the day where I had 5 flights – though each was around 4-5 minutes. This was a day dedicated entirely to flying a circuit by yourself, and it was on this day where I learnt initially how to control the top half of the winch launch followed by the full climb. The hardest concept in my opinion was judging how steep or shallow you should come in on final approach, but it was after many flights that on my 9th launch, I did so sufficiently well!

The Thursday wasn't great in terms of weather either – but I still managed to sneak in 1 circuit after lunch. In the evening, the weather cleared up, and I could do some wave flying – one of the highlights of my week. Doing smooth flying at 43 knots, reaching 4000 feet at 7pm was an amazing experience over the ridge.

The last day – we focused this day on carrying out a “ghosted solo” so that the people who do air cadets can achieve their Civilian Wings qualification. After my first launch of the day, I lined up again to takeoff, but we experienced a failed launch 50 feet in the air! The winch back released on us and we had to land just ahead – but in the end I was able to achieve a 24-minute unassisted ghosted solo on my 16th flight. We then packed our rooms, bags, ate some food and left to our very-well-missed beds to catch up on some sleep.

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In the end, I would do it all over again and again. I feel ever so thankful for the Honourable Company of Air Pilots for giving me the opportunity to advance into a career where the sky is literally never the limit, and I hope that anyone who applies for their scholarships receives them and enjoys the same experience I did.