

# Patrycja Kolodziejczk

## The Duke Scholarship

I am very happy to have been awarded the gliding scholarship offered by the Honourable Company of Air Pilots. It allowed me to undergo a week-long flight training at the Cambridge Gliding Centre. I had a minimal flying experience acquired at my university gliding club, however sadly there was always something in my way keeping me away from consistent flying and progressing towards solo, so I couldn't possibly be more grateful receiving this scholarship.

### During the course

I arrived on the Sunday evening, the day before the course started. This is when I collected my new logbook, progression card and the Glider Pilot's Manual book. I met Luca who also won the scholarship and who showed me around the area.

On Monday we met our instructor Steve Phillips. Honestly, I had so much fun flying with Steve and I am very grateful for everything he taught me. By the end of Friday we went through almost all the pre- solo tasks in the progress sheet. I am happy that I could do the whole winch launch by myself with some assistance. On the last day we even did a few demos on spinning. I enjoyed that task and it inspired me to perhaps try acrobatics one day.

As we flew every day we got to experience different weather conditions. I had a chance to fly in a thermal and build up the altitude, as well as fly in a more turbulent wind and experience how the glider behaves in those more challenging weather conditions. Tuesday afternoon ended up being a bit too windy so we spent it in the simulator room practicing our launches and landings. That came in handy later on when we started doing circuits.



On some days there were lots of single seater gliders out. That was a nice opportunity to have a closer look at them and talk to the pilots about the construction of their gliders.

Besides flying I also learnt how to drive the truck for retrieving the gliders. I also had the chance to sit inside the winch and observe how it is driven, and how to behave safely around it. Then on one of the evenings we helped to turnaround the gliders during a private event of evening flying.

One of my most unforgettable moments from the course is when the visibility was so good that we could see the London skyline in the distance.

On Friday afternoon after all the flying was done we were presented with our certificates. It was very nice to catch up and reflect on what was achieved during the week.

## A few stats

- We were lucky with the weather so in total I completed 18 flights. They added up to 6 hours and 15 minutes spent in the air. My longest flight was 1 hour and 11 minutes long. This was also the one when we went slightly beyond 5,000ft. It was incredible!
- 17 of my launches were by winch. I had one aerotow. Personally I prefer the winch launch as I find it more exciting.
- We flew 2 glider types – Puchacz and Perkoz.
- Due to changing wind directions, we had a chance to try out 2 different runways.

## Some final thoughts

Besides flying, I loved the peaceful atmosphere of the airfield in the evenings. The sunsets were stunning so we'd spend the evenings looking at the sun go down and sometimes trying to chase the rabbits and hares jumping around, which was quite funny. The whole experience of living on the airfield for a few days was brilliant.

I would recommend going for this scholarship to anyone who has ever considered flying but hasn't had much chance or luck to try it out yet. I like to say that smiles are the widest at 5,000ft and I think this is confirmed in the pictures! I am really thankful to the Honourable Company of Air Pilots and the Cambridge Gliding Centre for giving me these beautiful memories. I intend to continue gliding and pursue my next goals in this sport.

