

## **Report by Priya Patel from the Derbyshire and Lancaster Gliding club**

From 25<sup>th</sup> till 31<sup>st</sup> August, I had the amazing opportunity to take part in a gliding course at the Derbyshire and Lancaster Gliding club. We were a group of 6 youngsters with ages ranging from 16 to 24 years old. We arrived on Sunday late afternoon, following our very warm welcome, we were driven up to the airfield to have a look around and learn how to drive tractors so we are ready for the week ahead of us. After dinner, we were given a briefing on preflight checks and other safety things, we also met the instructors and the few other pilots/helpers.



Our first day we started with taking out the glider planes from the hanger and taking them up to the airfield. The six of us were split into 2 groups of threes, my group consisted of Rikcian,

Henry and I and our instructor was Alan Jolly. All 3 of us then had the chance to fly one after the other once before we started the training. It was my first time flying and I loved the feeling of being in the air. The launch was a winch launch which was exciting to experience. It felt like being on a really fast roller coaster that throws you into the sky.

For the following 2 days, we had more opportunities to fly with the instructor and getting the opportunity to learn new things. After some practice, I was getting more comfortable with being in the air and was able to feel in control of the glider. I could see my performance improving immensely from flight to flight, I was getting more confident with turns and being able to respond to instabilities in the air. I relished the feeling of flying and found it extremely peaceful to glide through the air. We also had the unique opportunity to fly on a T21-B glider plane which is a yellow and blue, old glider from the 1960s that had an open canopy. It was an entirely different and relishing experience! It's a slow glider compared to the Puchacz that we were used to flying and it had side-by-side seating which was more sociable.



During day 4 and 5, the weather conditions were not ideal for flying so we flew a couple of flights and also had the opportunity to spend some time in the simulator. Flying the simulator was a different experience and it increased my confidence as I was able to try new manoeuvres. However, flying the simulator is difficult as it is not able to capture the feeling of being in the air, i.e. being able to capture the reaction on the stick from a gush of air, like one would feel whilst flying the glider.

Overall, I had a really memorable time flying at the Derbyshire and Lancaster Gliding club. I found the club members to be really welcoming and felt that I really learned something completely new. Flying for me, before this course, seemed like something I would never get to do as it is expensive. This course has helped me in many ways to further my career and built my

confidence and helped me to believe that one day, I also can be a pilot, something I thought to be impossible before.

Another aspect of the course that I really appreciated was the team working aspect. Working in a diverse team with students that were of different ages and from all over the UK was inspiring. Team working in gliding is really important as flying a glider involves many other things that are not just flying, for example, retrieving the landed glider from its landing position with a tractor to its launch position.



Furthermore, meeting other members from the Derbyshire and Lancaster Gliding club was an exciting experience. The members are a diverse set of people who were happy to share their experiences with us younger pilots, especially how they got into flying initially and how they contribute to the club. The club also has a woman glider pilot, as there are very few women in aviation and as a young woman pilot, she was inspiring to meet and speak to.



