

The Honourable Company of Air Pilots Gliding Scholarship Report 2024

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In early May 2024, I received news that I was amongst the winners of the Gliding Scholarship awarded by the Honourable Company of Air Pilots. This took place in Andover with the Portsmouth Naval Gliding Club. I had only ever flown once before but had never been in a glider – I previously built model gliders during my A levels, and now I have been given the chance to fly them! Needless to say, I was beyond excited and grateful for the incredible opportunity to come.

The week began with briefings on our syndicates, how the flying would be organised, what would be expected from us regarding the collection and management of the gliders, and how to properly utilise the equipment in a safe and efficient manner. This encouraged us to work together, as gliding is a team effort.

The absolute thrill of the first winch launch is something I will never be able to forget, even if I tried.



The view at Middle Wallop Airfield

As well as practical knowledge during the flights, the instructors would always ensure that any questions I had were never left unanswered, especially regarding the mechanics of flight, and how the meteorological conditions play a crucial

role in gliding – as a Physics student, these were topics that intrigued me and it was surreal that I'd get to experience these phenomena airborne! Gliding is truly the purest form of flying, and I have learnt more in a week than I could ever have expected; I left PNGC fulfilled, full of confidence for the opportunities to come.



Our left hand circuit route



My first time in the Duo Discus!

My syndicate were allocated to fly in the Duo Discus for the weekend at Middle Wallop airfield and then the A14 glider during the weekdays at Upavon; we also had the chance to fly in the Grob, a motor glider that feels quite unique compared to a typical glider given it self-launches. Entering the week with pretty much no knowledge of how to fly a glider, to then exit having been taught to fly circuits with no control from the instructor is truly surreal. One of the most interesting and unforgettable moments were definitely practising stalls and launch failures.

Throughout the week at PNGC, we were given the privilege of being able to live a small part of the military life, having dinner each night in the Officers' Mess and given advice and guidance on various aviation career pathways. Listening to the instructors' and other scholars' stories and motivations for why they loved aviation was very insightful and encouraging. I was taught so much.

A huge thank you to the gliding instructors, the winch drivers, the organisers and speakers, to the caterers at breakfast and dinner – I am extremely grateful for every effort that has gone into making this week as enjoyable and rewarding as possible. The passion and knowledge of the instructors and everyone involved was deeply reflected in their generosity and willingness to teach. Thank you to the Honourable Company of Air Pilots for this amazing opportunity!