

Faith Riches The Virgin Gliding Scholarship



To begin, I'd like to say how fortunate I am to have this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. This scholarship was undoubtedly one of the highlights of not only the summer, but the entire year.

I spent a week at the Derbyshire and Lancashire Gliding Club with five other scholarship winners all aged around 16/17 and we all had a fantastic time. Teamwork was a vital part of this scholarship and as the week went on, we all got closer and managed to coordinate effortlessly together. When we weren't 2000 feet in the air, we'd go get ready to tow the glider.



I believe the first thing I learned was how to drive a tractor to



collect the gliders. I remember thinking about how surreal I felt driving a tractor. As mentioned by the instructors, we learnt to drive a tractor and fly a glider before even driving a car!

When flying, Alan, my instructor, was amazing; we managed to get in roughly 20 flights over the course of the week, find thermals, and I even had a flight that lasted nearly 40-minutes. He taught me so many things. I was already practising landing on the second day. He performed and taught me numerous manoeuvres while we were in the air, including circuits, stalling, turning, landing, and even winch launch failures. It was incredible.

On the penultimate day, I requested some winch launch fails, which was the most exhilarating thing I've ever done.

When the cable was pulled, we had to point the nose downwards, which felt like a funfair ride - I'll admit, the first time I had to refrain myself from screaming.



I am extremely grateful to everyone who made this happen, and I would strongly recommend it to anyone considering this scholarship. It's something you'll never forget, and it's just incredible.

This has been a huge steppingstone for my dream career, and I am so grateful to everyone at Derby & Lancs Gliding Club, who were all there to support us and share their knowledge. Also, many thanks to John and Sylvia for their hospitality.

