

Holly Davison

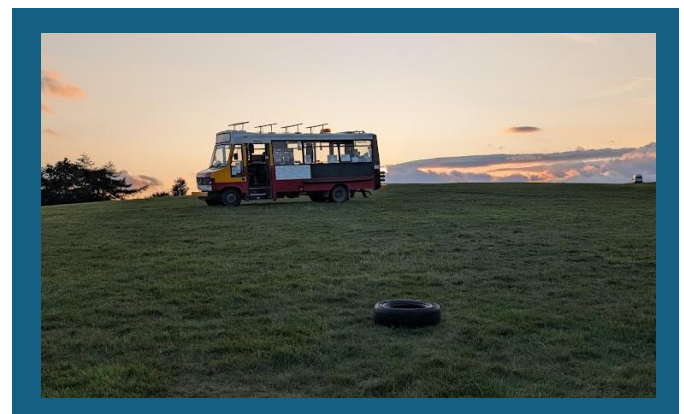
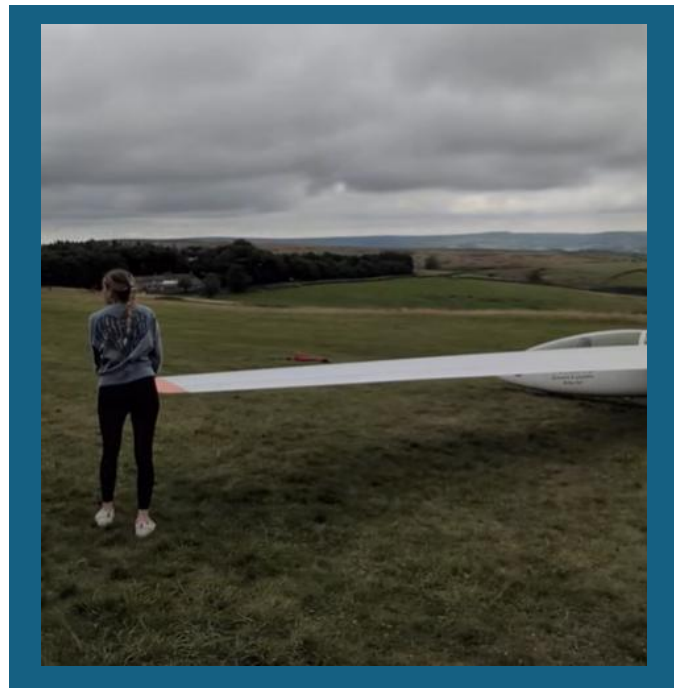
Red Arrows Trust Gliding Scholarship 2025



Earlier this year, I received the incredible news that I had been awarded a gliding scholarship through the Honourable Company of Air Pilots, where I was given the fantastic opportunity to pursue my passion for aviation and explore the vast world of gliding at the Derbyshire and Lancashire Gliding club, in the Peak District. The scholarship began with travelling up to Camphill and meeting the other winners, where we were warmly greeted by John and Sylvia and immediately made to feel welcome. From there, we were given an initial introduction to life at Camphill and what the week would entail- as well as being taken up to the airfield and learning how to drive tractors in order to collect and return the gliders back to the launch.

The next day after an amazing cooked breakfast by John, we began by unpacking the hangar before taking the gliders across to the launch point, where we first learnt how to complete pre-flight checks and familiarise ourselves with the gliders. From there we began our first flights! At Camphill, we were launched using a winch, where we were pulled across the airfield until we reached flight speed and gained lift; the feeling is indescribable! Once airborne, I was coached by my fantastic instructor Alan who took me from little gliding experience up to doing all my own gliding, launches and landings by the third day!

Throughout the week I was able to complete 16 flights (as we had good weather!) and learn how to use both thermal and ridge lift to stay airborne; with my longest flight logging at 54 minutes! The views and scenery were incredible, being able to fly near the Ladybower Reservoir (where the Dam Busters famously practiced) and see for miles was breathtaking. Furthermore, when we weren't in the air, we learnt how to wing run, attach and move the cables safely as well as learning how to signal to the winch driver- working as a team to launch, retrieve and move the gliders.





As the week continued, there was never a dull moment. From learning how to ridge soar to flying circuits, all of my flight time was unforgettable. In addition to this, we could unwind on a night by playing pool or darts after another delicious home cooked meal by John. On the final day, we were presented with certificates from Past Master Robin Keegan from the Honourable Company of Air Pilots. Afterwards, we were able to celebrate as a group at the progress we made over the week and everything we achieved.

Overall, my time spent at Camphill has been extraordinary, the friends I've made and the gliding experiences I've had will never leave me- not only creating an amazing foundation into my future career in aviation, but happy memories that I will carry with me for life. I am immensely grateful for the opportunity I've had and ultimately, I would like to say a huge thank you to John and Sylvia for making us all feel so welcome and at home throughout our stay at Camphill- it truly made the week. Also, to my amazing instructor Alan, for teaching me all of the intricate skills needed to fly a glider safely and effectively, whilst having fun at the same time. And finally, to everyone at the Red Arrows Trust and Honourable Company of Air Pilots for making this scholarship possible, it has been such an incredible, once in a lifetime experience that I will never forget!

