

The Honourable Company of Air Pilots

Gliding Scholarship Report 2024

Joby Girling

During the summer of 2024, I was lucky enough to be given a gliding scholarship by The Honourable Company of Air Pilots. This took place at Middle Wallop and Upavon, and was with the Portsmouth Naval Gliding Centre.

When I got the email to confirm my place on the course, I was very excited. I have been wanting to learn to fly for many years now, and this scholarship is the perfect opportunity to start. I didn't know what to expect with gliding as I had never flown in a glider, but it was such an incredible experience!

It was a great week, where I learnt so much about gliding, and also many different career opportunities that are worth me looking into. The group of other scholarship winners I was with were amazing, everyone was so kind and I think we have made friends for life! I also want to thank everyone from PNGC for the week as they all gave up their time to make it possible which included the organisers, instructors and the winch drivers.

We stayed on the military base for the week, and were privileged to be invited to have dinner and socialise in the Officers Mess during our time at Middle Wallop. This was an amazing experience to be able to see a small part of life in the Army, and it was great to be able to talk to everyone and hear their stories and advice during the week.

At the weekend we flew from Middle Wallop, and during the weekdays, we went gliding at Upavon Airfield which were both great airfields to learn at. I made some great progress throughout the week, and it was great to be a part of a syndicate with 3 others and our glider. Our syndicate was with the ASK-21 glider N3, and during the week we had to work as a team to retrieve the gliders and get them ready to fly which was a great challenge to see how efficient we could work.



Flying Over Middle Wallop In N3



Walking Our Glider To The Launch Point

The instructors on the course were amazing, and we had lots of incredible flights over the week. It was an awesome experience to be able to take off, fly the circuit and land without any help on the controls from the instructor! I also enjoyed practicing launch failures as it is important to be prepared for when things go wrong. It was also a great experience to have a flight in the Motor Glider too, it was a very different way of flying compared to gliders.

Unfortunately, we had 2 days cancelled due to bad weather, but to make the most of these, we had some amazing lectures and talks from the instructors. I learnt so much from these, including about airspace and glider limitations. We had lots of talks throughout the week about different career options and also to hear about pilots stories. It showed me lots of career options that I had never thought about before which is very useful.

I am hoping to visit Middle Wallop again soon to continue my gliding progress, and I will also look at joining a club nearer to home. Gliding is such an amazing way of flying, and I look forward to what my gliding future could be! I also think it will be a great way to help work towards my dreams of becoming a display pilot and flight instructor, I may look into doing that with gliders too now I have experienced flying them.

I am incredibly grateful for this opportunity given to me by The Honourable Company of Air Pilots, and I encourage anyone who is interested in flying to apply for the scholarship on the website, there is nothing to lose and if you do get through, it is an incredible experience!



N3 Taking Off From Middle Wallop