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Air Safety Trust Gliding Scholarship 2024

The moment I saw that I had been awarded the scholarship, I was overjoyed. This marked my first official step toward understanding both gliding and the operations of an airfield. My experience with the gliding program has been transformative, and I'd like to share how this scholarship has impacted my journey as an aspiring pilot. I arrived at the London Gliding Club in Dunstable on Monday, where I met my fellow scholars. Without delay, we began sharing our past experiences and future aspirations, all eagerly anticipating the week ahead.



Soon after, we received a briefing from the instructors, during which we were introduced to the principles of gliding and safe ground-handling operations. We then proceeded to our first flight. On that first day, we were launched by aerotow, giving us our initial experience of controlling the glider and the exhilaration of flight.

Over the following flights, we focused on aileron and rudder coordination, executing turns, and the importance of airspeed control and air brakes. By the end of the second day, I was handling the approaches and round outs for landing, with my instructor Mark managing the airbrakes. By the close of the week, I had progressed to being able to take off from the start and land independently with the airbrakes, achieving a reasonably smooth landing most of the time.

Each day, we learned something new and worked to perfect the skills we had been taught on previous flights, constantly striving to improve. Thanks to the instructors' debriefings and the on-site glider simulator, I was able to practice the maneuvers I found challenging, which allowed me to make significant progress the following day.

Throughout the week, I gained a comprehensive understanding of gliding principles—from handling the controls to interpreting weather patterns, and developing the essential skills required for safe, effective flight. My instructor, Mark Peters, was both incredibly supportive and patient, ensuring I fully grasped both the theoretical and practical aspects of gliding.

One aspect that truly stood out was the teamwork required to run an airfield smoothly and efficiently. Our teamwork was put to the test mid-week when the club members were

unavailable, and it was left to us scholars to operate the tower, communicate with the winch, and coordinate the launches. And to do this efficiently to maximize our time in the air.

This scholarship has been a pivotal moment in my aviation journey and has solidified my passion for the field. The skills I've acquired, along with the discipline, focus, and attention to detail developed through gliding, have inspired me to continue expanding my knowledge and experience. I am confident that continuing my gliding practice will provide a strong foundation as I pursue more advanced piloting skills, including powered flight.

The week was filled with unforgettable memories, valuable lessons, and lasting friendships. Working together and learning from each other's mistakes allowed us to progress more efficiently while making the experience enjoyable and fulfilling. I am incredibly grateful for this opportunity, which has reaffirmed my passion for aviation and given me the confidence to pursue a career as a test pilot. This scholarship has been a pivotal first step in my journey, and I am excited to continue advancing my skills in gliding and beyond.

Thank you to the Honorable Company of Air Pilots, the Air Safety Trust for making this all possible, and all the instructors at the London Gliding Club, especially Mark Peters for sharing his passion of gliding with me. Showing me to seek more opportunities to make my dream a reality. With a lot of hard work, I am tremendously excited for what the future has for me.

