

Zak Channing – AST Gliding Scholarship 2024

Derbyshire and Lancashire Gliding Club



My passion for flying started at a young age and as an Air Cadet I enjoyed some flying experience on a simulator. As a member of the Black Mountains Gliding Club, Talgarth Airfield, I had already gained a taster of gliding having undertaken two lessons, but my drive and skills truly soared to new heights in August 2024. I was

fortunate enough to gain the gliding scholarship with The Honourable Company of Air Pilots and this enabled me to spend a week gliding at the Derbyshire and Lancashire Gliding Club. Nestled in the heart of the picturesque Peak District and being one of the oldest clubs in the country, it was hard to imagine a better place to learn the art of gliding, with breathtaking scenery being the bonus. I set off early on Sunday to drive the 4 hours from my home in South Wales to D&LGC also known as the Camphill Airfield, When I arrived and was warmly welcomed by John and Sylvia. I was the first to arrive but was quickly joined by the other course participants, we received a quick briefing, toured the aircraft hangars and the launch site and then gathered in the clubhouse for dinner.

On Monday, we started by carefully moving our Puchacz gliders out of the hangar. We had two gliders allocated for the week, G-CJRJ and the one I flew in, G-CHKW. Part of our training involved managing our own glider recoveries, so we had a quick lesson on driving tractors before heading to the launch point to begin flying. Although the weather was slightly damp, the ridge system worked in our favour, and we were all able to fly, on day one I had approximately 10 minutes of flying.



Unfortunately, due to the location of the gliding club, the British weather and the Peak District are not always conducive to good flying conditions. However, we made good use of the realistic flight simulator, which provided an excellent substitute for actual flying. The afternoons always brought slightly improved weather and were better for flying. We were able to get some flights in, staying airborne for 10 -20 minutes on each launch.

Launching at Camphill was a winch launch as it was good to experience this as in Black Mountains they use a tow launch. It was good to be able to use the experience gained on the simulators into practice, particularly circuit and landing practice. Unfortunately, the course came to a close all too quickly.

On Friday evening, we were awarded our certificates, and on Saturday morning, it was time to say our goodbyes. Despite only spending a week together, we had all become good friends.

Overall, it was an incredible experience, and I am grateful to the Honourable Company of Air Pilots and the D&LGC for the opportunity. Special thanks also go to my instructor, who did an outstanding job teaching me to glide. By the end of the week, I had accumulated 2 hours 13 minutes of gliding experience.



Since returning to my home, I have continued to fly and am currently able to take off and land a glider without instructor intervention and I am well on my way to flying solo. My aim for the future is to gain my Bronze Endorsement and then obtain my PPL. Hopefully, if I am

fortunate enough, The Honorable Company of Air Pilots will continue to support me in my flying career as my final goal is to be a commercial pilot. One day I will achieve this!