

## **Cassiopeia Bentley – APFC Scholarship 2024**

My week at the Midland Gliding Club has been one of my life's most incredible and transformative experiences. What started as a venture into the unknown, with no prior gliding experience, ended with me confidently soaring through the skies, performing multiple manoeuvres, and learning essential skills that have deeply enhanced my passion for aviation.

Throughout the week, I became proficient in various aspects of gliding, from launching, packing, and preparing gliders to learning about the principles of flight, thermalling, and circuit planning. I had the privilege of applying these skills many times throughout the scholarship. Thermalling, in particular, was one of the most fascinating aspects. It taught me how to read the sky, find natural lift, and stay aloft longer—truly connecting with the fundamentals of flight. This was especially meaningful to me, having never flown a non-powered aircraft before. Completing a circuit of the Mynd was another accomplishment that gave me an immense sense of achievement. I experienced how to execute it smoothly and safely, landing independently, and even getting a hand in take-offs! All of which I can only credit to the experienced and diligent instructors.

Beyond the technical skills, I made friendships and memories that I will carry with me for life. The sense of community at the club was incredible, and everyone was willing to share their knowledge, creating a supportive and inspiring environment. This close and welcoming community made the week not only educational but incredibly fun and rewarding with inspiration not only from the stories told but the knowledge of the aviation industry shared.

This gliding scholarship has been a key stepping stone in my aviation journey, helping me transition from a beginner to someone who feels truly comfortable in the cockpit and has confidence that they have what it takes. It has solidified my aspiration to pursue a career as a pilot, and I am deeply grateful for the opportunity.

To those who sponsor and support scholarships like this, your contributions do so much more than teach technical skills—they inspire the next generation of aviators. I can't wait to take these lessons forward, both personally and in sharing my love of aviation with others, just as those at the MGC did for me.

Thank you for this incredible experience!

Cassiopeia Bentley