

## Katie McKie – Past Master Dorothy Saul Pooley Scholarship

The week I spent as Midland Gliding Club was one of the best experiences and opportunities I've ever had. I progressed from absolutely no gliding experience to being able to fly the glider through the winch launch, circuit and landing. This was largely thanks to the brilliant instructors, James and Tom, and also the great group of people I was with. We all worked together on the ground to get gliders in the air as quickly as possible which gave us all good air time. Unfortunately there wasn't many thermals across the week so lift was limited, however this did allow us to do more shorter flights and focus on launches and landings.



Midlands Gliding Club uses a winch launch system which is exhilarating (and slightly unnerving when you've never been gliding before!) with a retrieve winch as well, which really speeds up the time between each launch. We all got to work the retrieve winch, which was very exciting, and do many of the other ground operations that then got ticked off in our log books. Overall the week was so much more than just gliding, making new friends, learning many new skills and networking with other members and private glider owners.

The location of Midlands Gliding Club is great. Situated on Long Mynd, which is 1500 ft above sea level already, it gives you good altitude and allows you to take full advantage of the long ridge. The sheep and horses on the airfield did pose slight hazards to take-offs/landings but were mainly good at being herded away by cars.

For me personally, the trickiest thing to master was the landings, as we were faced with many different wind directions and speeds over the week course. I really benefitted though from my 30 min motor glider flight, as it allowed me to do many approaches without actually landing and there is less pressure knowing you can always pull up again.

The course was a great first step for me towards my dream career of commercial pilot and so for that I am very grateful. It has motivated me to continue working hard and solidified my passion for aviation.



I would absolutely recommend applying for this scholarship as it not only gives you the chance to gain great flying skills but allows you do to so with a group of like-minded people and the support of the Air Pilots. Midlands Gliding Club were also used to hosting similar groups and so were very welcoming, caring and encouraging. A shout out has to be made to Helen for her cooking! I hope to go back again soon to continue with gliding and hopefully go solo!

- Katie M

