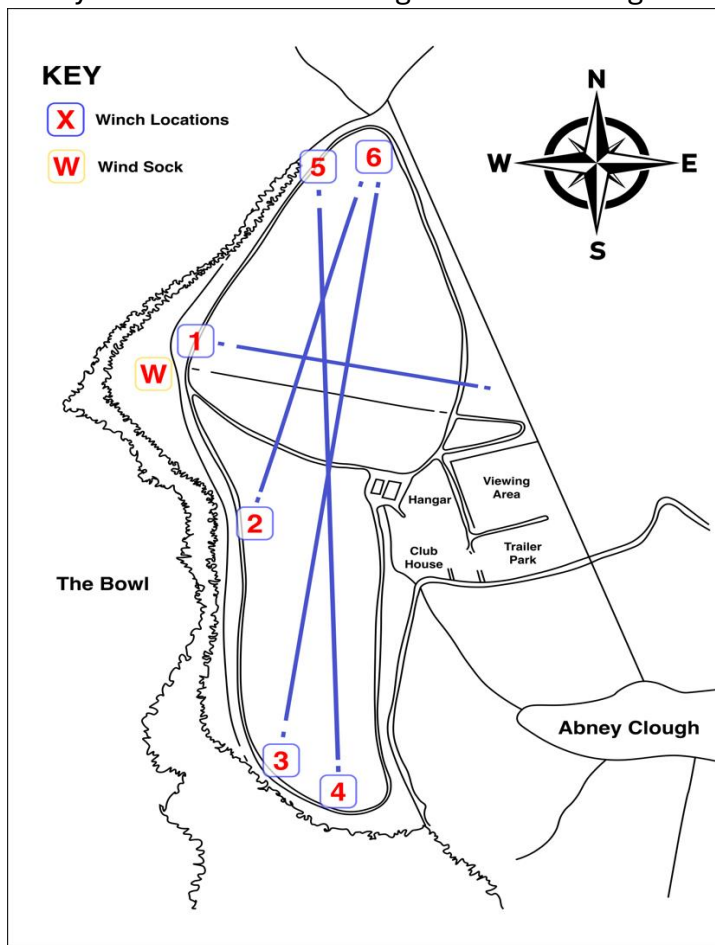


Benjamin Latchford

Air Pilots Benevolent Fund Scholarship 2024

My name is Benjamin Latchford, in the last 4 years I have become passionate about flying, gliding and aviation. The opportunity that Air Pilots presents is once in a lifetime and a dream come true for those that love aviation. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity given to me by Air Pilots and thankful to the people at Air Pilots and staff at Derby and Lancashire Gliding club for allowing me to achieve such a memorable week.



My scholarship took place at Derby and Lancashire Gliding Club in the Peak District. The club was launched at Camphill Farm and opened in 1935. The airfield is on a 1350ft hill and has 2 main launching points. One from the North of the airfield and the other at the South.

During the course



I arrived at the airfield early Sunday morning after staying at a local town nearby the night before. I was met by several members of the gliding club who allowed me to gain a preview of what the next 7 days were going to be like. I later spent the rest of the day talking with the other scholarship winners becoming good friends with them.



The next day I awoke early morning to prepare for the first launch, it is a feeling that is like no other soaring into the air and I am so grateful for the opportunity that I have had to do so. I was greeted by a warm cooked breakfast prepared by John at 8am which I happily had before heading down to help unpack the hanger at 9.





The process of unpacking the hanger and moving the gliders is a lot more complicated as it seems as it takes a team of people to properly move gliders about in such an enclosed space precisely.

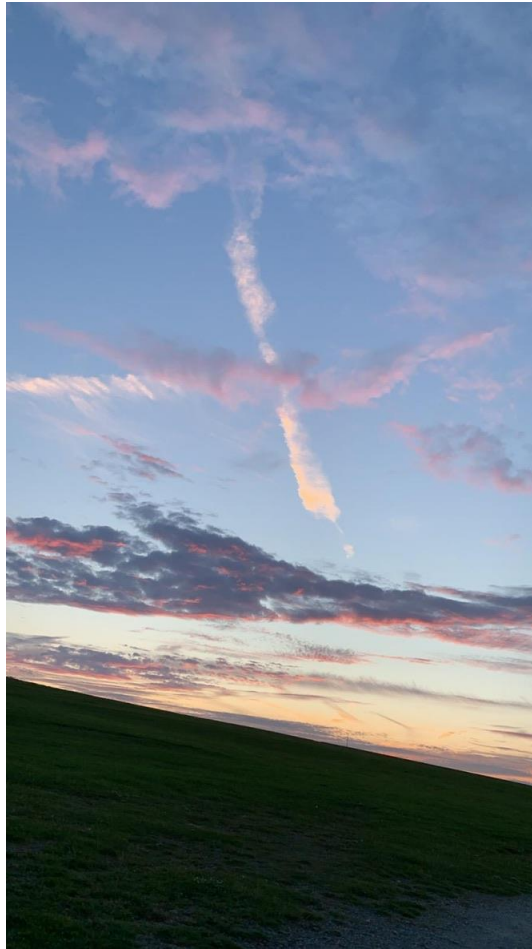
We then had to inspect the gliders to make sure there were no issues and grab the parachutes from inside the hanger to be brought with us. We were taught to check each individual part of the glider and how to check if there were any internal issues. After that we decided which launch point to use based on the wind direction.



I was given a huge amount of support not only by my instructor Pete but also other club members on how to fly, launch, and retrieve the gliders. As I have only been in a glider once before and had a passion ever since it felt like a dream come true to be working with so many people who shared such an interest.

We were all taught not only how to fly the gliders, but also retrieve them by tractors or gator. As I was 16 during the time of my course and not had any experience driving, collecting the gliders was a thrill as it is a unique experience that allowed us all to help (however I'm not sure how much my instructor appreciated me injuring him with the tractor, sorry Pete).





Throughout the week my instructor Pete explained to me how the glider functions and how to properly adapt to different in air scenarios. He explained everything in an easy manner growing my confidence tremendously.

Over the whole week I completed 21 launches and had over 3 hours of flight time which was incredible. I reached a height of over 2,600 feet which made me feel truly free and gain an insight of what my future will be like when I continue gliding in the future.

Finally, I would like to say a huge thank you to Sylvia and John who made us all feel at home throughout our stay, making sure we were happy and fed while we stayed there. I want to say thank you to the club members for teaching me the values of being a pilot and showing me the ropes to a side of my life that I once never thought of. Lastly, I would like to say a massive thank you to Pete who trained myself and two others during my stay, who stayed with me during my highs and lows of my week as well as being patient with me during my struggles.

Thank you to the Honourable Company of Air Pilots, for showing me a new side of my life and giving me this opportunity. I am now wishing to further my gliding skills at a gliding club to go solo in the future.

