

Joe Norton

The Air Pilots Flying Club Gliding Scholarship 2024

Having recently completed my weeks flying at London Gliding Club, I can say with confidence that this has been one of the most exciting and unique experiences of my life.

From the moment I sent off my application, I felt that this would be a great experience and opportunity to further my knowledge and skills around flying. I have been interested in aviation for a long time, being in the Air Cadets for some years and being a member of a gliding club when I was younger. I always loved being in the air, whether it was in K21s or Grob Tutors, and so when I found this scholarship program it seemed like the perfect way to further dive into flying. Once the interviews came and went, finding out that I had been selected as one of the winners was truly an amazing feeling that I won't forget.

From the moment that we all arrived at London Gliding Club, we were thrown straight into the action, being briefed on the plan for the week and the setup for the flying. Within the first few hours of being there we were already up in the air. It was a brilliant feeling to be back up in the air, and the views were of course breathtaking. The learning curve was incredibly steep, but with the amount of flying that we got in even on just the first day, we had all got down to the basics before long, managing adverse yaw, turns, thermalling and so on. My instructor Trevor explained every process and



input and was great at getting the very best out of my flying. It was very rewarding to see myself improve and my flying get better during the week, and the good weather all week meant that we were able to go up every day to get lots of practice in. Even when we weren't up in the air, there was plenty to keep us busy on the ground. Driving the buggies to pick up and tow the gliders was a lot of fun, as well as going through the process of hooking them up to the winch and launching them.

We would spend the evenings on the flight sim, chatting and relaxing, preparing for the next day of gliding. Everyone got along well and shared a love for flying, which meant that there was plenty to talk about, discussing the previous day of gliding and what we would be doing tomorrow, whilst helping each other out with our circuits on the sim. We even visited Dunstable town a few times for dinner, which was a great way to wind down the day.

By the end of the week, we had all become confident in our flying and were progressing well. I was able to do all of the flying myself, my roundabouts / rollouts just needing a little work. I found the winch launch takeoffs especially fun, and loved the feeling of the acceleration as the

glider was pulled up into the sky at such a steep angle, I could even have sworn it was vertical at times. I remember too at one point looking outside, close to the glider, and spotting a buzzard almost level with me, hovering over the fields, it was an exhilarating feeling to overtake this bird mid air, and it is memories like that which I will never forget. There were, of course, learning experiences, but every day we were briefed and given feedback on the progress of the flying, so it was very useful to hear in order to know what to focus on, and the fact that I was even in a position to improve my flying provided more than enough motivation to do so.

I learnt a huge amount during the week at London Gliding Club, and feel that my flying skills have improved considerably, as well as my understanding around it. It has inspired me to further my journey in flying and pursue my goal of becoming a pilot, and I would like to take up gliding again once I have a chance to. The instructors did an amazing job of guiding us through and showing us into the sport. I believe that gliding has a charm and attraction that you simply can't find in any other type of flight, and this scholarship has cemented my view in that. I have made friends and had experiences that I will keep with me for the rest of my life, and I would like to thank London Gliding Club for hosting us and making us feel so welcomed, the Air Pilots Flying Club for sponsoring my scholarship, as well as Trevor for being an amazing instructor and patient throughout the course, (even when I made a couple of rough landings!). I am very grateful to have received this scholarship, and am very excited to see what opportunities await in the future.

