

## Holly Thomas – Air Pilots Flying Club Scholarship



From the moment I arrived at the Derby and Lancs Gliding school, I felt welcomed by everyone there!

Sylvia was lovely and showed me around the gliding school with my parents before I got to meet my instructor for the week. Alan was brilliant and helped ease any nerves I had. Before dinner, we were shown what we would be doing that week and even got to watch the gliders get put away by club members which was very entertaining. We had cooked meals every night in the gliding club bar and Sylvia's deserts were out of this world.

The others also completing the scholarship had very similar interests to me and we got along very well. We spent time together playing pool, cards and watching tv whenever we weren't out on the airfield. We all hope to become pilots in the future, even though we all wish to reach this milestone through different paths. I have definitely made friends for life! I am still in touch with them now and hope they all achieve their aspirations and succeed in their future.



All the members of the club were very helpful and were never afraid to answer any of my questions and give out valuable advice. Many of the club members have been gliding for decades and a few were said to be the best gliders of their time. They all had very interesting and inspiring stories and on the first night, we spoke to a pilot who had just returned from a cross-country flight in which he was air-bourne for hours.

The first thing I learnt when I arrived was how to drive the tractor. Throughout the week, we helped around the airfield collecting gliders, attaching cables and helping launch the gliders. It was very fun and if we weren't gliding we always had something else to do.

We flew the Puchacz Glider throughout the week. My instructor's name was Alan and he was extremely helpful. Alan instructed three of us during the week so we all had a good amount of air time (I achieved 21 launches). From the moment I arrived to when I left, he was amazing. We had some great times while in the glider, and he was always happy to answer any of my questions. We also had a karaoke session whilst in the air!

We were all very lucky as we had great weather all week. It rained once but luckily it cleared up by the time we were ready to launch the first glider.



During my week at the gliding club, I was able to have a flight in an old T21 glider! It was incredible! There was no canopy and I even got to take control for a bit whilst in the sky.

I had an absolute amazing time and would recommend applying for this scholarship to anyone with any interests in aviation! I appreciate being given this opportunity and am still aiming to achieve my solo flight - thank you!

