



News Aviation
Trainee Pilot Marco White dropped in to his native Lisdoonvarna, Co Clare along with Senior Pilot Donal Loughnane to give free flights over the Burren to 8 lucky draw winners from Ukraine who are living in Lisdoonvarna. Pictured are 11 year old Damir Kyliak with Tania Deineko and Veronika Rakatina (front) and (back) Senior Pilot Donal Loughnane, Viktoriia Zavorodnia, Anastasia Lidvinenco, Ihor Balanarov, Oksana Meshyna, Alona Husachenko and Trainee Pilot Marco White. Photo: by Eamon Ward

The sky's the limit for high-flying Marco



A high-flying young student surprised the residents of a North Clare village when he made a quick visit by helicopter last week.

Marco White, 21, flew into Lisdoonvarna with his instructor Donal Loughnane to the delight of local residents and Ukrainian refugees who were offered free panoramic rides over the Burren.

There was huge excitement as the helicopter landed in the GAA field next to the Hydro hotel on Wednesday afternoon. Locals, school students and the residents of the hotel were treated to short flights over the village and the surrounding countryside.

A former pupil of Mary Immaculate Secondary school in the village, Marco had been studying computer science in Limerick, before changing to a career in aviation in early 2022.

Marco said: "I have always loved flying but would never have imagined it as a career choice. It was only by chance that I heard about this training scheme at the National Flight Centre in Dublin. The best thing about this scheme is the flexibility, you can do it as part of a degree course or independently, like I did. There is no feeling like it in the world, the adrenalin rush I get when I am up in the sky is exhilarating."

With 45 hours of flying under his belt, Marco will graduate as a private helicopter pilot with his Private Pilot's Licence PPL (H) in May/June, once he has passed his final exams. The next step will be to train for his commercial pilot's licence – CLP (H) which requires a total of 155 hours in the sky and will take a few years to complete.

"My ambition is to continue my training and complete my commercial licence. In the meantime, I am working in operations at the National Flight Centre in Dublin. This involves learning everything about aviation; from fuelling aircraft to working in the office and everything in between. It's great experience and I am learning so much."

"Once my training is complete, my plan is to move abroad for a few years, get some more international flying experience before returning to Ireland to pursue a career in the aviation industry at Shannon airport.

In recent years, there has been a global decline in the number of young people training to become airline and helicopter pilots. Figures released by Boeing have revealed that there are 602,000 more airline pilots needed over the next 20 years, with an additional 20,000 helicopter pilots required over the next six years.



Darragh Owens, Head of Development at the National Flight Centre said: "Right now there is a global shortage of pilots with all the main aircraft manufacturers forecasting the need for a significant increase from the current numbers."

"Our graduate pilots enjoy successful careers as Captains, First Officers, Training Captains and Type Rating Examiners with world leading airlines including Aer Lingus, Emerald Airlines, British Airways, Cathay Pacific, Emirates and Ryanair."

"We need to attract a new generation of young people into the industry. Here at the National Flight Centre we are passionate about training the pilots of the future and supporting students to realise their dream of an exciting aviation career"

"While the integrated/fulltime training course involves significant investment by students this should be considered in light of the rewarding salaries that pilots can earn through their career. In fact there has never been a better time to become a pilot."



Trainee Pilot Marco White dropped in to his native Lisdoonvarna along with Senior Pilot Donal Loughnane to give free flights over the Burren to 8 draw winners from Ukraine who are living in Lisdoonvarna – Photo: Eamon Ward

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