

Joshua Ali – Gliding Scholarship

Over the Summer of 2016, I was given the opportunity to take up gliding under a scholarship with the Honourable Company of Air Pilots. It all began with the initial application, in which I then attended an interview, it was after this that I was given the exciting news that I had been successful and would be learning to glide on a residential course!

My scholarship took place at Portsmouth Naval Gliding Centre, which I later found out gave breath-taking views over Lee. Upon arrival, I met a number of members of the club, all of which were extremely welcoming. I managed to catch a group of other members who



had just completed their course and were at their ceremony. It was great finding out how much they learnt in their time gliding, and I could not wait until I was in the air!

Part of gliding is that the weather needs to be right, and on the first full day, the weather was against us, which resulted in no flying at all. However, the day was highly productive as I essentially went through an in depth safety briefing, as well as learning about many important areas of gliding. I learnt about the extensive number of drills and exercises, as well as how to assist in the running of the airfield.



Within the week, I learnt so much about myself, and I couldn't wait to start my first flight of each day, I was launched by aero-tow and with my initial flight, I was very rusty with following the tow, but I got better after each flight with more practice. I experienced so much

in the air, including finding thermals, stalls and aerobatics! My circuits were gradually coming together and I was really starting to get a feel for the aircraft. Apart from gliding, I also was able to experience a variety of roles, and this would keep ground operations running efficiently. As well as this, I got to take part in quizzes, and was given interesting talks by members who really had eye opening stories to tell. I also got the astounding chance to fly in a primary military trainer which I will never forget!

I thoroughly loved my time gliding at Lee. I am so very thankful to my sponsor, Air Pilots, and the Portsmouth Naval Gliding Centre for putting together an amazing course which I was able to take advantage of. My plans now are to continue to fly to achieve my solo, before going on to achieve further qualifications!