

HCAP Gliding Scholarship – Muhammad Hassan

I am incredibly grateful to have completed my gliding scholarship, awarded by The Honourable Company of Air Pilots. The course took place at Cotswold Gliding Club under the guidance of my instructor, Keith, and gave me a fantastic introduction to the fundamentals of flying.

Throughout the week I learnt the fundamentals of gliding, including aircraft control, airspeed management, trimming, circuit planning and landing techniques. Each day built on the last, moving from the basics of handling the aircraft to flying full circuits with increasing independence. Alongside the flying, I picked up plenty about how a gliding club runs day to day, from ground handling to keeping an eye on the weather before every launch.

Airspeed management was one of the trickiest things to get used to at first. In my early flights I found myself struggling to keep the speed steady, especially on the approach, but with Keith's guidance this improved noticeably as the week went on, and by the later flights I was able to control it much more confidently.

One afternoon our flying was cut short by an approaching thunderstorm. Before we could get everything packed away, we ended up flying through some turbulence and rain on the way down, which was an intense but valuable experience as it gave me a real sense of how quickly conditions can change and how important it is to read the weather throughout the day.



Highlights

One of the highlights of the week was getting to experience a loop and a wing-over, which really showed me what a glider is capable of beyond straightforward circuit flying. By the final day, I was

able to complete a full circuit and land, which felt like a real milestone after a week of steady progress.



One of the best parts of the week was simply meeting everyone at the club. Between the instructors, the other scholars and the club members, I was surrounded by people who were genuinely knowledgeable and generous with their time, and everyone was happy to share advice, which was hugely valuable to me as I keep working towards my goal of becoming a pilot.

It was great to share the experience with fellow scholars Ayan Tauseef, Dominic Davis and Daniel Nesbeth, and to learn alongside them throughout the week. A huge thank you to Keith, our instructor, and to the whole Cotswold Gliding Club team for an excellent week, and to The Honourable Company of Air Pilots for making this opportunity possible.

