

HCAP Gliding Scholarship Report 2026 - Ayan Tauseef

Recently, I was fortunate enough to be selected to receive a Gliding Scholarship from the Honourable Company of Air Pilots which I completed at Cotswold Gliding Club during August 2026.

This scholarship provided my first opportunity to take part in flying experience. My lifelong goal is to become a pilot, therefore being exposed to gliding at an early age not only increases my personal motivation but also acts as a crucial experience which I will be able to refer back to when starting flight training in the future.

Across the five days, I had progressed from an individual with no previous flying experience to being able to take full control of a glider during takeoff, departure climb, en-route cruise, descent approach and landing. This scholarship provided an opportunity which otherwise I would not have been able to experience.



I arrived at Cotswold Gliding Club the evening before the five day course began. After speaking to numerous members at the club, I felt right at home on the airfield. Later that evening we had a short introduction with our flight instructor who would later guide us throughout the rest of the week. During this introduction he explained the structure of each day which was as follows: morning briefing at 9am, taking out gliders from hangers by 10am, completing all safety checks by 10:30am and ready for first glider takeoff by 11am.

Below I will give a brief day by day breakdown of the topics covered and activities completed:

Day one began with our first briefing with the instructor. He began by explaining the physics behind a glider including lift, weight and drag alongside the effects they have during flight. We also focused on the fundamental controls of a glider such as managing air speed at different altitudes and the three stages of turning. Once we had made our way to the hangar to take out the gliders, we were all assigned different duties to ensure the safety of equipment being used

when transporting them to the airfield. I was assigned as the buggy driver and I must admit, it was great fun driving the buggy around to tow gliders or offer lifts to other glider pilots.

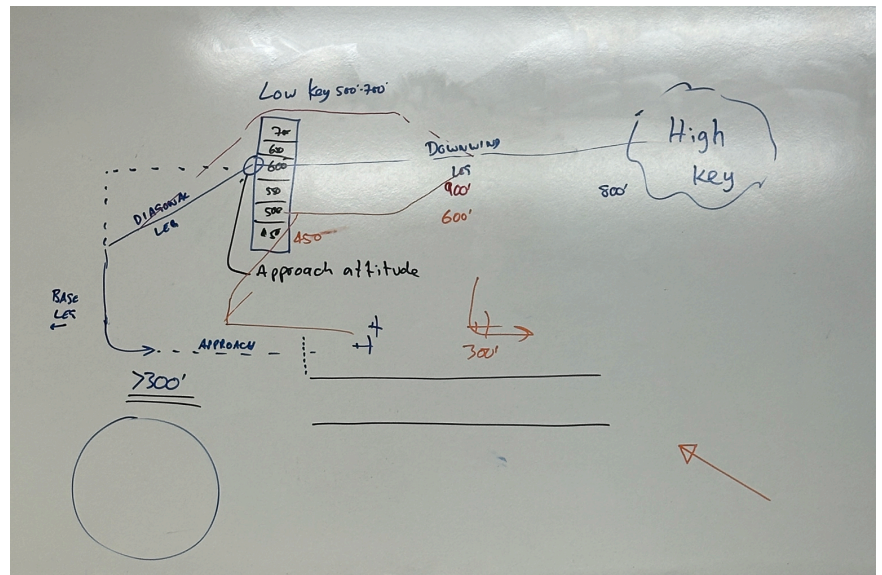


Throughout the day, we were taught skills that we would be using for the remainder of the scholarship. This included how to connect the aerotoll cable to the glider and takeoff signalling and callouts (“take up slack” and “all out”). The first day introduced us to the basics of setting up a glider for takeoff and fundamental flying skills.

On day two, during the brief we were taught the theory of trimming, air brakes, identifying thermals, monitoring weather patterns and pre-flight checks. Later on in the day we put the theory into practice throughout multiple flights. In my opinion, one of the hardest things about gliding which experienced glider pilots are able to do effortlessly is simultaneously applying the correct amount of rudder and pressure on the stick takes a significant

amount of practice. Simple turns are definitely not as easy as they seem and I am able to say I have a newfound respect for flight instructors who not only teach students how to fly, but also remain patient and composed in all types of situations.

Day three introduced us to the process of landing a glider alongside monitoring changes in weather. This included practising the landing circuit, managing wind gradients on approach and selecting reference points on the runway. On the right is an image of the diagram drawn by our instructor in the morning briefing to aid our understanding of the theory before practicing these skills in flight.



Finally, days four and five were the days in which I had the most fun.

This was because by this point we had covered most of the theory that we had to complete for the scholarship, hence these were the days in which we spent the majority of our time practicing these skills. We were fortunate enough to experience some acrobatics in the glider including a loop and wingover. The loop was my personal favourite, at maximum height we were pulling a total of around 3G, so three times our bodyweight which was very fun to experience. Additionally, we also had the opportunity to sit



and I'm pleased to say it turned out better than we expected! You can have a look at my fantastic cooking skills above.

By the final day, I was able to complete a full unassisted circuit and landing from 1,500ft which was a fantastic way to finish the scholarship.

Overall I am able to confidently say this has been an invaluable experience for myself and anyone that either aspires for a career within aviation or simply has a passion for flying should definitely apply for the gliding scholarship. Personally, I have accepted an offer to study MEng Aerospace Engineering with an Industrial Placement Year at the University of Liverpool starting September 2026. Alongside my five year university course I will aim to complete my Private Pilot Licence, through a scholarship such as this, with the intention to later obtain a fATPL licence and eventually secure a commercial pilot role.

in during a cross country gliding briefing which was more interesting than I initially realised. The amount of thought and preparation prior to beginning a cross country flight is impressive, this included factors such as NOTAMs and downloading information to glider instruments. On day five, we met with the Honourable Company of Air Pilots representatives and we were presented with our course certificate.

On an additional note, the week also gave me the chance to try my hand at cooking for the first time. We decided on a pasta bake,

