

Ali Hassnain

The Royal Air Force Charitable Trust Gliding Scholarship 2025

Since I was a young boy all I was ever interested in was flying and aeroplanes, whenever I would see an aeroplane, I would be the happiest boy on earth and as I grew so did my love and fascination for aviation. Since a young age I knew I wanted to become an airline pilot and be around and involved with aviation whenever possible. I had my first trial flight when I was just 12 and it was the most incredible experience I had, so after I had completed my academic studies in school and college I started working towards my PPL, which I am currently doing at Halfpenny Green Airport. During late 2024 I had heard from a friend about the Honourable Company Of Air Pilots and heard about the fantastic opportunities that they have for young aspiring pilots and was told I should join the company. I then filled in an application form and posted it out to the company, in early January I had the great news my application had been approved, and I was now a member this was one of the proudest moments of my life and exciting as I thought about the brilliant opportunities that were coming my way.

I had heard about the 2025 Gliding Scholarship, and I immediately filled in an application form and submitted it prior to the deadline. After a while of waiting I was given the amazing opportunity to come down to London to sit an interview for the Gliding Scholarship, and after a tough application process and interview I was given the delightful news that I was accepted onto this year's intake for the gliding scholarship. I was filled with great joy and kept looking forward to what it will be like to soar through the skies and get a feeling of the purest way of flying as with gliding you need great skill and excellent judgment. I then selected the choice to undergo this Scholarship at Cotswold Gliding Club from the 4th-8th of August. When the time finally arrived, I made my way to the Cotswolds Gliding Club and got comfortable and immediately made friends with those who were also taking part in the Scholarship.

For the first 2 days we were not able to do any gliding due to poor weather conditions, so in this time we were shown around the Gliding Club and had the chance of practicing on the simulator. On the 3rd day we started gliding and we were launched up by an aero tow which was quite a great experience, I was feeling a bit apprehensive for my first gliding flight but when I got airborne, I thoroughly enjoyed it. I practiced stall recovery; I also got used to the controls of the glider and practiced circuits. I learnt the pre take off checklist known as CBSIFTBEC which stands for the following: controls, ballast, straps, instruments, flaps, trim, brakes, eventualities and canopy. I also learnt the pre landing checklist known as WULF which stands for the following: water, undercarriage, loose articles and flaps.

On the final day of the scholarship, we were visited by two very kind representatives from HCAP, who told us about their experience within aviation, and it was so interesting hearing about their experiences for example one of the very kind representatives told me about how he used to fly for British Airways, on the Trident and the Boeing 747. The other very kind representative told me about how she was a flying instructor and taught young aspiring pilots fulfil their dreams it was amazing meeting these two lovely people and hearing their experiences. Overall I really enjoyed the scholarship and I am grateful to HCAP and Cotswolds Gliding Club for making this opportunity possible, at the end of the course I received a certificate and it was the proudest moment I had ever felt.

