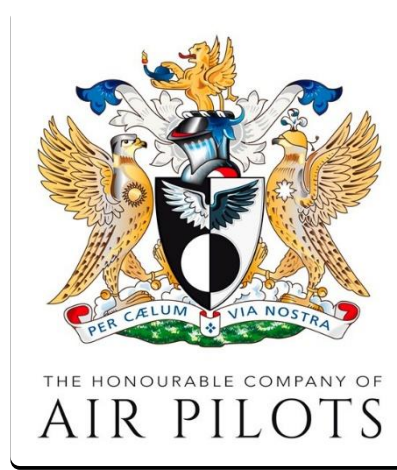


Raadin Zanganeh

Air Pilots Flying Club

Gliding Scholarship 2025



From an extremely young age I have been captivated by the world of aviation. The sight of aircraft soaring gracefully through the sky has always filled me with admiration and I have long admired these magnificent works of engineering for their ability to combine technical precision with the wonder of flight. The opportunity to immerse myself further in aviation through the Honourable Company of Air Pilots Gliding Scholarship has been an incredible step on this journey to the flight deck. By how understanding the basic fundamentals of flight throughout my experience in a Glider.



After a tough application process and an interview process, I was jubilant to be awarded a week-long residential gliding course at the renowned London Gliding Club which has been kindly funded by The Air Pilots Flying Club. This opportunity gave me the chance to immerse myself fully in every aspect of gliding both practical and theoretical gaining first-hand experience in flight training, aircraft handling and how gliders require a high amount of coordination and the essential principles of aerodynamics, safety and airspace restrictions due to the location of the Gliding Club.



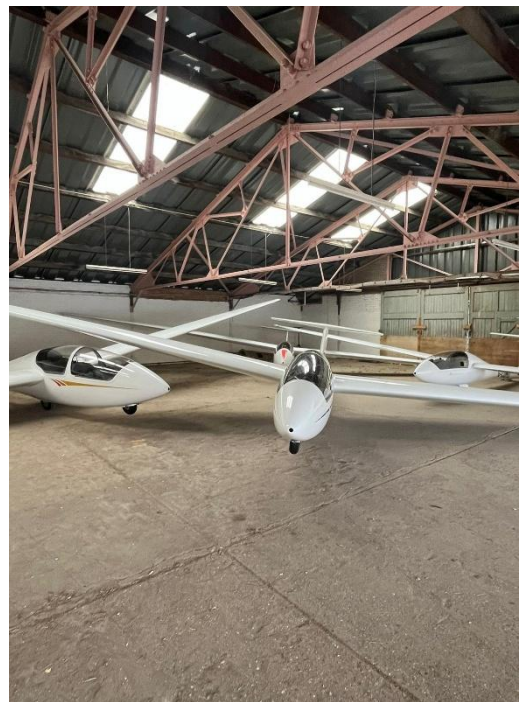
London Gliding Club is Located in Dunstable Downs It has been known as one of the hardest gliding clubs to fly at due to its challenging terrain such as the ridge and its tricky landing area. London Gliding Club was founded in 1930, it is one of the oldest and most well-known gliding clubs in the UK. The ridge along the Dunstable Downs provides opportunities for ridge soaring, where I have used the rising air currents created by the slopes to maintain or gain altitude without the need for thermals. While this makes for an exhilarating and technically rewarding flying experience with amazing scenery and flying over Whipsnade Zoo. The proximity of London Luton Airport adds another layer of complexity, as pilots must remain mindful of controlled airspace nearby. In fact, strict airspace regulations mean that gliders flying above the club cannot exceed 3,000 feet, requiring constant awareness of altitude and positioning, but allow for great sights of Commercial Airlines coming in for final approach to Luton.



Throughout the week, I had the exciting opportunity to fly the ASK-21 a two-seater glider, that is widely regarded as one of the best training aircraft. It is a beautifully engineered and highly versatile aircraft, designed to be both forgiving and responsive, making it ideal for learning the fundamentals of flight. With its sleek fiberglass construction, excellent visibility from the cockpit, and stable handling characteristics, the ASK-21 allowed me to truly appreciate the elegance of gliding. I was able to experience a variety of manoeuvres, from basic straight-and-level flying to coordinated turns using stick and rudder and stalls. From the guidance of my instructor Istvan I was able to fly the winch launch, perform circuit planning and adapting the circuit of need to due to height loss or gain and other factors and how to thermal effectively by keeping the speed low which makes the circle tighter and gain more out of the rising air and land the glider.



Furthermore, in addition to my training I learnt about ground operations including wing running, running the tower and having effective communication, towing gliders and launching gliders using the winch or the Aerotow. London Gliding Club's great hospitality ensured that we all had the best experience throughout the week. The instructors, volunteers, and members went out of their way to ensure we felt welcome and supported, creating an environment that was both professional and friendly, their willingness to share their knowledge and passion for aviation ensured that each day was not only educational but also thoroughly enjoyable.



This amazing experience not only deepened my passion for aviation but also showed me how rewarding gliding can be such as finding a thermal and using it. Spending the week learning to fly and taking part in ground operations taught me teamwork, discipline, and problem-solving skills that will stay with me for life. I would highly encourage anyone with even a curiosity about aviation to try gliding. It is accessible, exciting, and offers a unique connection to the sky. Inspired by what I have learned, I hope to share my experiences and encourage more young people to explore opportunities like this, helping to inspire the next generation of aviators to chase their dreams of flight.



My deepest gratitude goes to the Honourable Company of Air Pilots and my sponsor The Air Pilots Flying Club for providing these invaluable opportunities for young people like myself. I am truly thankful for their support, encouragement, and belief in the potential of aspiring aviators. This scholarship has not only allowed me to experience the thrill and discipline of gliding firsthand, but it has also inspired me to pursue my passion for aviation with even greater determination. Their generosity has made a lasting impact on my journey to the Flight Deck.