

HCAP APFC Gliding Scholarship Report - Shourya Gupta

Recently, I had the incredible opportunity to attend a gliding scholarship at the London Gliding Club, organised by the Honourable Company of Air Pilots. From the very beginning it felt special. The chance to fly in a glider, an aircraft with no engine, was both magical and surreal. The silence in the air and the freedom of flight made it one of the most enriching experiences I've ever had.

Although the first day was too windy for flying, it turned out to be a blessing in disguise. We spent time learning about the airfield, the different approaches and landings, and the two main ways to launch: winch launches and aerotows. It also gave me the chance to bond with the other five students on the course, people I'm still in touch with now. The instructors made a real impression on me too. Their patience, small tips, and quiet wisdom stayed with me throughout the week and made me feel at ease from the start.

Once the weather cleared, we were up in the air. My first flights were unforgettable and even a little overwhelming as I adjusted to the strange mix of exhilaration and calm that comes with gliding. I had flights lasting up to 40 minutes, and while I initially felt a little airsick, I quickly grew more comfortable. With every launch, my instructor, Trevor, gave me more responsibility: first small movements of the controls, then handling launches, and eventually guiding full circuits. By the end of the week, I was able to fly, approach, and even land under his



supervision. That moment of hovering above the runway before letting the glider settle gently on the ground felt so incredibly satisfying!

The social side of the course was just as important. The other students were brilliant company, and the instructors and staff were so welcoming. One night I couldn't sleep because it was too hot in my accommodation, and someone kindly lent me their own fan, which made me feel at home. In total, I managed around 14 flights, each one a new chance to improve and learn.



Looking back, I can honestly say this was one of the best experiences of my life. It gave me not only a solid foundation in flying but also confidence and memories I'll never forget. I'm hugely grateful to the Honourable Company of Air Pilots for making it possible, and I'd encourage anyone thinking about applying to go for it. I didn't

expect to be selected, but I'm so glad I applied. There's nothing to lose, and everything to gain.

