

Sport

FLYING

100 not out for aero club

A century of soaraway success for Halton AC

Daniel Abrahams

IN ITS 100th year, Halton Aero Club achieved a perfect 10 of trained scholarships as it continues to prove the value of the flying school.

Beyond flying training, the club commemorated its anniversary with numerous UK fly-outs, a six-aircraft overseas expedition to Poland and participation in the RAF Cosford Air Show and Royal International Air Tattoo.

Air Cdre Mark Manwaring, Officer in Charge Halton Aero Club, said: "The club provided flying training for its RAF Apprentice members – 100 years later, assisted by the RAF Charitable Trust, this concept continues. In 2025, we trained 10 Scholars on a mix of initial scholarships (to first solo) and advanced scholarships (to award of Private Pilot's Licence)."

With a mission statement 'To afford Servicemen and Women,



irrespective of rank or profession, the ability to learn to fly at the minimum practical cost, the club's rich history has seen it build and race its own aircraft and have ties to a potential escape from Colditz Castle.

Having built an aircraft know as the Mayfly, the club participated in the 1929 King's Cup Air Race, while one of the founding members, Cecil Hugh Lattimer-Needham, went on to write two books on aircraft design – one of which found its way into the Colditz Castle library in the



HIGH-FLYER: A successful first solo flight completed by Junior Ranks & Officers Pilot Scholarship Scheme pupil

mid-1930s. During its time as a prisoner of war camp, it's believed one of the prison guards loaned the book out to RAF captives Flt Lts Bill Goldfinch and Jack Best, who used it to design the glider that was secretly built in the loft for an escape attempt.

The war ended before the daring duo had a chance to fly to freedom, but successful modern-

day applicants to the RAFSA Junior Ranks & Officers Pilot Scholarship Scheme (JROPSS) can learn to fly for free under the RAF Charitable Trust initiative.

Running for a decade, the scheme has trained nearly 200 RAF personnel – with HAC responsible for training more than a third of that number.

Manwaring added: "A century

after its formation, the club continues to reflect the ideas of those who had a vision for enhanced 'air awareness' in the RAF ranks. 2025 was a fantastic year – helped by the excellent summer weather – and a full programme is planned for 2026."

● For further details search haltonaeroclub.co.uk and rafsa.co.uk.

SCUBA DIVING