

GLIDE ANGLE

MIDLAND GLIDING CLUB · NEWSLETTER
MID-WINTER EDITION

DECEMBER 2022

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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Here we are at another year end and, in general, it's been a good one for our club. Membership is gradually increasing, we made a profit on our activities, we have acquired a new (to us) two-seater and a brand new one is on the way in the early Spring. We have hosted a successful competition (Enterprise) and ran our own highly enjoyable Task Week, as well as another energetic Juniors meeting. The club continues to introduce people to the wonderful activity to which we are all addicted via our first flights and courses and the feedback from these is routinely positive. As a group of diverse individuals gathered together around our joint love of gliding we have achieved a lot.

Where is the 'but' you might now be thinking? Well, there isn't one really but there is a 'please'. Like the rest of the world we are now facing great economic uncertainty – our standing costs are rising

significantly and we need to find the resources to meet them if we want the club to continue to prosper (see James Moore's article in this issue). Fortunately, the solution is right here and ready to go. Starting with immediate effect the *MGC Volunteering Campaign* is the method by which we will secure our future. Many members already volunteer both on the field (instructing and field operations training, helping run courses, winching, etc.) and in the background (maintaining equipment, recruitment, committee work, etc.) but we need to bring more of the roles that we are currently paying for into the volunteering remit, in particular looking after our fleet and our buildings. So, if you have a skill you can offer please don't hesitate to do so. However, if you feel you don't have any skills... take it from me you are wrong – there is plenty to do that can be done without a degree in engineering! Also, we really need to pass on the skills from our older members to

secure our future so why not help out and learn something new?

How much time do you need to offer? The answer to this is simple – as much or as little as you can afford. If you live away from the club why not add on a day to your current flying visits a few times a year. If you live close by why not sign up to a task and drive up when you have a spare morning or afternoon to put a couple of hours in? Volunteering has its own rewards for the individual (see John Matthews' article in this issue) – you could be missing out on something you will not only enjoy but also have the satisfaction of knowing you have made a valuable contribution to the continuance of our club. So, contact our club secretary Ian Brooker (secretary@midlandgliding.club) and volunteer ... please.

Rob Kronenburg
Editor
newsletter@midlandgliding.club

CHAIRMAN'S BIT

by JON HALL

“Going solo is just the beginning ... there are lots of things to achieve after that.”



So, the soaring season is over and winter is well and truly here. My glider is being refinished at present so I have nothing to fly other than the club fleet. Time to think about next year.

First off, how to keep your head current over the winter months? Personally, I like flying the simulator, at home and at the club. It isn't exactly like the real thing but it keeps your head in flying mode, especially if you can use a VR headset. It also gives you lots of opportunity to practice those things that you maybe don't do enough of in your own glider, like launch failures. Do you know at what altitude you would decide to go round rather than land straight ahead? Have you tried landing ahead from a northerly launch? What difference does having the engine out make if you have to land back?

Of course, if you still have access to your own glider or the club fleet the answer is to fly as often as possible, especially in conditions that you may not be used to. If you haven't done it before grab an instructor and let them show you how. But the

simulator also gives you an opportunity to try flying from other sites, maybe ones you plan to go to next year. How do their ridges work in different wind directions? Are the trees down the eastern side going to give you curl over and turbulence? What is it like flying in the mountains and do you need to learn a different set of skills? Where exactly are those land out airfields?

You might also want to think about what your goals are for next year. Going solo is just the beginning and there are lots of things to achieve after that. Many pilots want to fly cross country so getting the necessary skills, badges and endorsements is a prerequisite. After that there is aerotowing, aerobatics, cloud flying, competitions and, of course, expeditions. Expeditions to other sites are always fun and a chance to learn new things. Every site is different; from the way they launch to the local topography, and there might be an opportunity to learn to fly in wave. In the past this club has organised expeditions to Llanbedr, Millfield, Aboyne, Denbigh, Gap, Sisteron and Jaca, to name just a few. Taking

a glider away from its home site is always a challenge. Learning to tow a trailer is just the start. Fitting in with the organisation and members of another club is a wholly different thing!

Winter is also a good time to review the way your glider works, especially your navigation helpers and flight computers. Think about what you want from your navigation aid. Are the navigation boxes telling you what you need to know? Can you simplify the layout by removing those things you do not need? Do you really know how to navigate through your device's menu system easily without having to think too much about it. Practicing while flying is not recommended. Winter is a great time to practice on the ground.

Jon Hall
 Chairman
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CFI'S MUSINGS

by WILLIAM BREWIS



“Use every opportunity to stay current. Even a short circuit or two on a quiet day helps keep us sharp. Ask an instructor to show you something new. If you don't have any ideas I'm sure they will!”

My first musings as a new CFI – less than a fortnight into the new role – must start with a huge “THANK YOU” to my predecessor, Rose. We have been very fortunate to benefit from her experience and leadership over the last couple of years and I am, in particular, very grateful for the good state in which the baton has passed to me. A tough act to follow but I'll do my best!

Winter is coming!

Some will say that its already here and the days are still getting shorter. So what can we do to make the most of it? Some suggestions:

Use every opportunity to stay current. Even a short circuit or two on a quiet day helps keep us sharp. Ask an instructor to show you something new. If you don't have any ideas I'm sure they will! If the conditions are tough take the opportunity to fly with an instructor. You will likely expand your comfort zone and learn something too.

Use our resources. Try a flight in the motor glider. Almost all the flying exercises (and more besides) can be done in the motor glider with the bonus of being able to

repeat something without having to come in and land. Try a 'cross-country' in the simulator. How far can you get in a 20 knot north-westerly?

Use the longer evenings. Read around the subject. There are excellent books to read and loads of excellent resources are now available on the internet too. Just ask around for some recommendations, I have been exploring www.chessintheair.com recently.

The BGA website also has lots of great material so why not try looking at some of their safety briefings? These are mostly developed within the BGA, but also include other sources. For example, the newest published leaflet on ridge flying originates in New Zealand and is a good preparation for our own ridge as well as for those flying in the Welsh mountains or further afield. The safety briefings are available here <https://members.gliding.co.uk/library/safety-briefings/>

On the topic of safety, winter flying can present additional hazards. Here are some points you might consider as part of your TEM (Threat and Error

Management) before or during a winter flight:

- *Rain/snow:* If you are airborne make a landing decision in good time. Don't be the last to land or hoodwinked into a poor 'group think' decision (because everyone else is doing it, I should be ok).
- *Misting canopies:* on the ground and/or in the air. Make sure you stop flying before it happens.
- *Is your approach clear?* If the sun is low will you be able to see? Will you be able to stop without using your wheel brake? Even if it works (which should never be assumed) it will not be as effective on wet grass/mud!
- *High in wave:* Ask yourself will there still be plenty of light when you reduce altitude and want to land?

See the BGA safety briefing on winter flying for more detail on these and other points.

Most importantly over this winter.... Stay safe and have fun!

William Brewis,
Chief Flying Instructor
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TREASURER'S BEAN COUNTING

by JAMES MOORE

With the end of the financial year on the 30th September and the start of the new one immediately after, we can look back at the last twelve months and forward to what's to come. Last year's trading accounts show our income was £311,000 with a net income (profit) of £47,000. While these figures will change in the statutory accounts, they show a continued improvement we can all be proud of.

However, the new year brings a new set of challenges. We thought Covid would be difficult but now we are now faced with large increases in energy costs and the cost-of-living crisis. In the last year, our propane cost has doubled - I estimate the cost could increase by £12,000 to £24,000 per annum. Our electricity costs are fixed until January 2024, but if the supplier goes out of business, we could see the price increase by £29,000 to £41,000 without warning. Such an increase would burn through the club's reserves quickly. We are working on this particular problem through the energy programme managed by

Neal Clements which is looking at how we can reduce our energy consumption and generate our own.

The summer soaring season is only three or four months away. How do we manage these standing cost increases? We could decide to increase our prices to match them, however, with our members' and customers' budgets under pressure that would probably be counterproductive and result in the club's income falling faster than the proverbial brick making the situation worse. We should therefore take a different path to keep our gliding affordable.

We are improving our financial control. That includes the committee scrutinising budgets and expenditure. For example, by not advertising in Sailplane and Gliding, we can save £2,700. Reducing the value of visitors' gliders in our hanger helped save £1,000 on our Airfield Operators and Hanger Keepers Insurance policy. We will also consider delaying capital projects until the economic outlook is more certain.

If we can reduce our other costs without sacrificing quality we will be in a better position.

As flying is what we are about, the price of airside activities, flying and launching, is based on cost. The price we charge covers the capital, insurance, and maintenance of the activity. As most of these costs are fixed, the more we fly the lower the cost per minute flown. So please take another flight! By looking after the club's equipment as if it was your most prized possession, we can also reduce the cost of repairs and maintenance. However, there is another way in which we can quickly and immediately reduce our costs. You can help to keep your gliding affordable by volunteering your time on airside and landside tasks. As a club, we have lagged behind the rest of the movement towards this volunteering culture. We must catch up. It will make a big difference.

treasurer@midlandgliding.club



**“radios are great in theory,
however, only if they are
working and being used
correctly”**

AIRFIELD SAFETY

by MIKE GREENWOOD and WILLIAM BREWIS

Use of Radios. Radios in gliders are very useful things. If you have a radio turned on and set correctly you can hear what is going on around you. For example: the air ambulance calls on our frequency if it has to come to the Mynd, and the Red Arrows radio us if they are going past. Helicopters and passing aeroplanes often radio on our frequency to let us know what they are doing. One of the most useful things radios offer in terms of safety is downwind calls. By calling downwind other aircraft approaching the circuit know you are there; the main winch driver knows you are on approach so will not launch if you are having to do an abbreviated circuit; and the retrieve winch driver also knows you are on circuit. Hearing the same call from another pilot you will know to land long because someone is on circuit behind you.

The club fitted air band radios to the retrieve winch many years ago because we had two incidents where a motor glider had to make an emergency landing due to engine failure. The pilot had been radioing the launch point to make sure the cable was dead, however, on both occasions there was no radio there even though a handheld should have been available at the retrieve winch.

So, radios are great in theory, however, only if they are working and being used

correctly. To work for our flying operations three things are essential:

- Every pilot should have a radio. If a radio in a club glider isn't working, get a handheld from the office.
- When you are flying, have the radio turned on and the volume turned up so you can hear it if someone calls. This includes if you are working the retrieve winch.
- Pilots need to use the radio to make downwind calls.

This last point was once common practice but has slowly slipped away to the point that at times not a single call is made all afternoon. This needs to change and is an important safety issue. We used to be good at it, and now we aren't so let's change that by adhering to the following rules applicable from now on:

- Have a radio in your aircraft if at all possible.
- Have it turned on for every flight.
- Have the volume turned up.
- Make a downwind call every time.
- Instructors will now reinforce this essential good habit as part of our training regime.

safety@midlandgliding.club

FLY PAST

This regular column invites members to tell a story about a significant flight from their career aloft. It could be a first or a last, a longest or a shortest, or one they will just never forget for the excitement or (anxiety!) it caused. In this episode Julian Fack describes an interesting cross-country flight from the famous wave site Aboyne in Scotland that had a sting in the tail.

In early September 2015 I was at the UK Mountain Soaring Competition in G-DDJF with Alasdair Lewis. On the day of this flight the wind direction was Southeast, not a favourite wave situation. An hour after launch the whole fleet was still struggling below cloud base, and further progress looked hopeless. One pilot even radioed in: "director, do you realise no one is in wave yet?"

The small competing field included John Williams, world record holder in wave, flying his 20-metre Antares, and Santiago Cervantes, a top Portmoak wave specialist in his Discus. Suddenly John Williams kindly called out; "wave entry towards Ballater" and with his help we all contacted it without delay. Not long after I heard his start call, just after my own at the same height of 7600 feet. The task



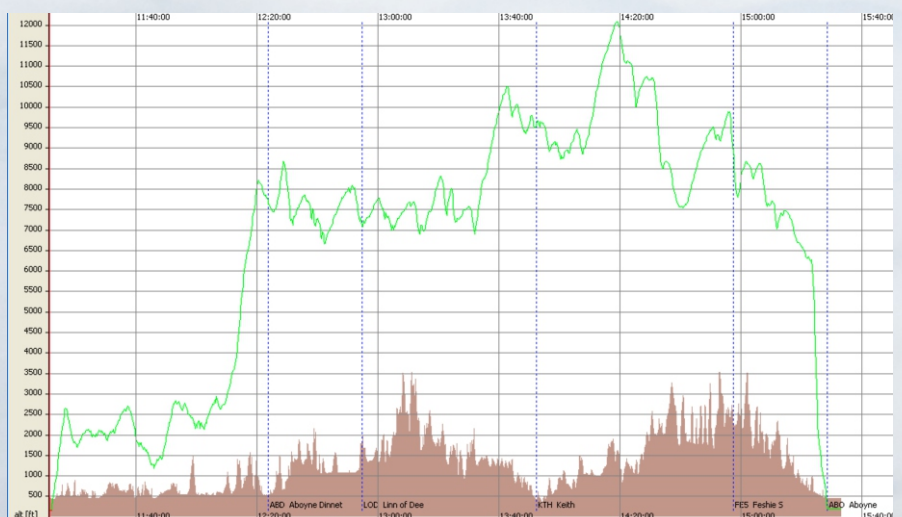
was Aboyne, 42 kilometres West to Lyn of Dee then 73 kilometres Northeast to Keith then 83 kilometres South West over the Cairngorms to the



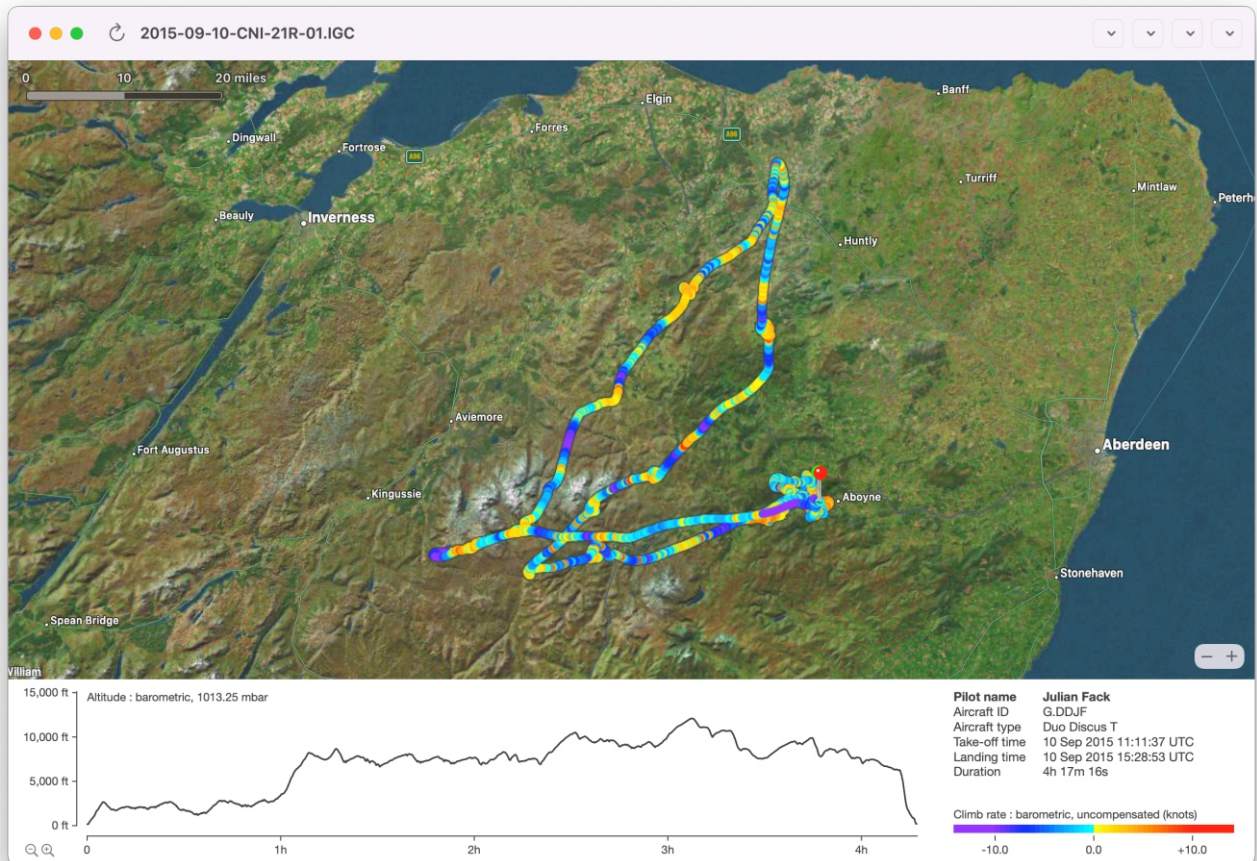
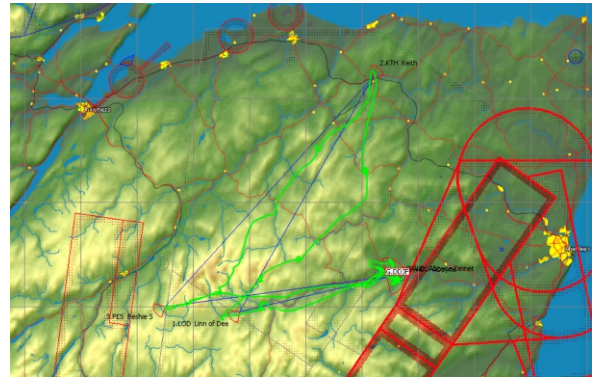
Feshiebridge South turn point, and 62 kilometres East, back to Aboyne, a total of 260 kilometres.

Looking at the trace we had a very uneventful first leg to Lyn

of Dee followed by half the second leg to Keith, more or less cruising on track between 7000 and 8000 feet all the way to Rhynie, where we found a 3.5 knot climb to 10,300 feet which took us easily to Keith where the views near the coast were spectacular. We were only 12 kilometres short of the beaches, and the sky was blue. We had plenty of height to round the turn and cruise down the third leg near to Glenlivet, the famous whisky distillery, where we found another nice 3.5 knot climb took us over the Cairngorms but there we were down to 7600 feet and needed a climb to get over the cloud bank and back home.



We struggled with a very slow climb, almost giving up at one point, on the South side of the Cairngorms for what seemed like ages, topping out at 9900 feet, enough to round the turn at Feshiebridge South (on the Southwest corner of the mountains) and head home. We did lose 2000 feet immediately after the turn, but 7900 feet seemed enough to get back. We had a fast run back home, 62 kilometres in 27 minutes,



for a total duration of just over three hours. Below cloud base it was very turbulent and with a strong South Easterly wind not ideal for a short narrow East-West runway, so, despite instructions on the radio that there was no problem I took the emergency grass strip straight into wind.

I was very surprised to hear John Williams call his finish shortly after mine, which I thought was obviously impossible as he is generally unbeatable in wave. I knew he started at a similar time to me, so I was interested to hear his comments. When he

approached, he said: "How did you get on?" I replied: "OK, not too shabby, around 85 kph," then he commented "the second lap was better." In the same time as my single journey he had completed the task twice, his second lap at an average of 177kph, and as it happened, he had not even won the day! Santiago scored around 165kph in his Discus, and therefore he won on handicap. Wow, what a performance! After that experience I understood how the top Portmoak and Aboyne guys, given the right conditions, manage to finish a 500-kilometre task by mid-morning.



CFI's FAREWELL (and an idiot's guide to the SFCL)

So, the end of an 'interesting' year as CFI has come (note: some synonyms for interesting are difficult, challenging, exasperating, infuriating, enjoyable... please delete as appropriate!) There are many challenges facing Will and the club, not least the financial ones (which are explored elsewhere in this newsletter), so a quick plea from me in the extraordinary energy price explosion we are currently experiencing to keep the outside doors shut and turn off the light when they aren't needed over the winter.

One of the challenges the gliding community faces is the introduction of part SFCL (Sailplane Flight Crew Licensing) (providing it comes in next December as planned). I am not sure many people know what this really means in practice so herewith a quick 'idiot's guide'.

At present, approximately 2,500 UK glider pilots have SPL's so the CAA may be inundated with another 5-6,000 applications next summer/autumn. It makes sense to wait for the outcome of the consultation if you haven't already applied, but do not leave it too late, or the turnaround time for your new licence might be prolonged. Please note that notwithstanding the new part-SFCL rules, the club may also apply additional local rules, for example I suspect annual checks will not disappear.

Pre-solo pilots.

This will be the area with the biggest changes. Our current progress card will need to come into line with the SPL syllabus although that will result in fairly minor changes. However, the progress card will now need to be kept by the club in some format. We are currently working on the simplest way of doing this, but it means the instructor will need to update it each day that they fly with a pupil, and the club version will need to be updated as well.

Qualifying for an SPL.

Once trainee pilots have completed their training course, they present themselves to an examiner for a skills test, and if they successfully pass it, they get their SPL (Sailplane Pilot Licence).

The training course includes the following:

1. Theoretical knowledge
2. At least seven hours of flight instruction in sailplanes, including at least:
 - i. Three hours of dual flight instruction
 - ii. Two hours of solo flight time
 - iii. 45 launches or take offs and landings
 - iv. either:
 - (a) one solo cross country flight of at least: 50km (27nm); or:

- (b) one dual cross country flight of at least 100km (55nm) which by way of derogation from 2.iv, may be completed in a TMG (Touring Motor Glider)

Please note we do not currently have an SPL examiner on site, but we are working on it.

If you do not have an SPL on the 8th December 2023,

you will revert to being a pilot under supervision, i.e. the equivalent of a pre-bronze pilot. You will have to formally be given permission to fly and explicitly be given permission to do anything advanced such as flying aerobatics or cross country each time you fly. If you subsequently decide you want an SPL you will have to meet the requirements as above in section (1), including the theoretical knowledge test taken within the previous two years, and fly with an SPL examiner for an assessment of competence.

If you have an SPL,

you will be the equivalent of a current silver distance pilot, but 'rolling recency' will apply i.e.

In the last 24 months before the planned flight you will have completed at least five hours of flight time as PIC (pilot in command) flying dual or solo, and at least:

- i. 15 launches; and
- ii. Two training flights with an SPL instructor

If you do not meet these requirements, you will effectively have to re-sit your 'skills test' with an examiner or revert to being a pilot under supervision.

Note: each launch type needs to be kept current as well: i.e. at least five winch launches in the past 24 months and at least five aerotow launches if you want to aerotow 'not under supervision.'

Instructor and passenger carrying SPL's.

BIs (Basic Instructors) disappear but if you are flying passengers as an IFP (Introductory Flight Pilot) the following recency rules will apply. There is only one class of instructor so Full 'Cats' (Fully Rated Instructor) effectively become Assistant 'Cats', i.e., they will lose their privilege to assess the equivalent of the bronze exam which will become the SPL knowledge and skills tests undertaken by an examiner (and as stated above, we do not yet have an SPL examiner at the Mynd).

Anyone carrying a passenger must have completed at least 3 launches either solo or dual in the last 90 days.

Instructors must within the last three years, have completed:

- Approved instructor refresher training at an ATO (Approved Training Organisation), a DTO (Declared Training Organisation), or a competent authority, i.e., currently the online instructor refresher seminar and
- at least: (a) 30 hours; or (b) 60 launches or take-offs and landings; and
- within the last nine years completed a nine-year check with an FI(S) who is
- qualified in accordance with point SFCL.315(a)(7) and nominated by the head of training of an ATO or a DTO (currently Rose Johnson and Neal Clements).

Please note that I take no responsibility for the accuracy of this summary. The 'bible' is the Easy Access Rules for Sailplanes available at:

easa.europa.eu/en/document-library/easy-access-rules/sailplane-rule-book-easy-access-rules

Yes, I know the CAA will have their own version, but it is highly likely to effectively be the 're-badged EASA

rules'. The BGA also has a helpful information page at:

members.gliding.co.uk/flying-information-and-resources/pilot-licence-conversion/

Further guidance for instructors and how the 5-year checks and 9-year checks work during transition is available at:

members.gliding.co.uk/flying-information-and-resources/pilot-licence-privilege-recency-and-

Finally - good luck to Will!

Rose Johnson

ADVERSE YAW

In this column members describe ideas about how things are run at the club; about the systems we have in place that enable a large group of disparate individuals to work together in relative harmony to get us in the air. This time John Matthews explains the personal benefits that can be had from volunteering at the club.



What's it all about being a member of the Midland Gliding Club? Well apart from the flying, the fantastic views, Helen's cooking, some excellent beers in the bar, and a great group of people... there is much, much more. One thing that might not immediately spring to mind are the opportunities to give back to the club in many ways other than paying your membership and flying fees.

You can volunteer to help out on the field during the summer course programmes and the many other events the club runs like Task Week or Club Enterprise. The launch director role helps the field operations run smoothly and is especially useful on busy days when private owners (you!) turn up

to fly. Another essential operation is winching. I have recently been signed off as a winch driver which, as a volunteer, saves the club money. Learning to drive the retrieve winch means at least I get to sit down (ha ha)! And let's not forget the sheep don't mow the heather areas of our field. Someone needs to get the sit on mower out and take it for a spin. Another task you can do sitting down!

Away from the field many tasks need to be carried out to keep the club running smoothly. There are a number of people in the membership with experience and knowledge in mechanical, electrical and many other varied competencies. These volunteers are always in demand to 'get

things working again' after busy, prolonged use and could always use more qualified help. If you don't have this knowledge or experience, a great way to acquire it is to help them out.

More mundane tasks are always waiting to be done like cleaning, tidying up, taking the empties out from the bar, and washing the many empty glasses. Yes, I know there's a dishwasher, but it needs loading. Help is always appreciated by the catering team of Helen, David, Jane, and the others who regularly assist in busy times.

I've been coming to the club for just over two years now and I have thoroughly enjoyed it, even when flying doesn't

always take place. I am not alone. I have noticed over this time that many members, and their spouses, partners, and families, quite often turn up just for the fun of being amongst friends. They are clearly here for other reasons than the flying. The word 'family' is quite often used to describe places where people gather together: clubs, pubs and even workplaces. In my own career on the railways we still call ourselves the railway family, something that persists even with those who are new to the industry. I have realised that the Midland Gliding Club is very much a family, which members regard themselves as being a part of – we are the Myndy Family! In my own situation I have to say that being a member of this club

and getting involved in the tasks that means it will continue and prosper has helped me move on with my life in ways I could not have imagined. I am eternally grateful to all who have accepted me into the family.

Remember, the club will only continue to operate if all the members contribute to its running and operation in whatever way they can so if you are not currently involved in some aspect of the club's operation just ask – someone will find you something that you can do, and if my experience is anything to go by, it will enhance your pleasure in being a member.

Onwards and upwards.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

CAA Consultations:

Hopefully members remembered to act on the BGA's frequent requests to respond to the CAA consultations regarding the Pilot Medical Declarations (closing date 5th December) and on Pilot Licensing (closing date 16th December). If you have not done the Pilot Licensing consultation, there might just be time after this newsletter is published to read up the BGA advice and then fill in the online form on the CAA website.

members.gliding.co.uk/caa-pilot-licensing-consultation-guidance-for-pilot-and-clubs/

FRTOL course (Flight Radio Telephony Operator's License):

Do you have a FRTOL but are a bit rusty? Would you like to acquire a FRTOL before you apply for your SPL? Then there is a BGA-run online course starting on Tuesday 10th January that operates one evening a week for six weeks. There is reading to do before you get started and homework during the course and the fee is only £30.

Sign up at:

ruskin.me.uk/bga-frtol-course/sign-up

Member Achievements in 2022:

Up to now we seem to have had a gap in recording the success of our members when they pass a personal milestone in their gliding career. Starting from the beginning of 2023 we will try to remedy this situation with a place on the club notice board where members can mark up these special events as they happen. Meanwhile here is a list of those we do know about – well done to all.

First Solo

Darren James

Bronze Badge

Patrick Ashmore
Jared Chohan
Mike Jaworski*
Laura Martin
Sohrab Noshirwani

Silver Badge

Chris Greenhalgh
Rob Kronenburg
Bob Moss
Rhys Williams
Charlie Wilson*

100 Kilometre Diploma

Rob Kronenburg (Part I)
Rhys Williams (Part I and II)

Gold Badge

Tim Brunskill

Started their journey to silver by obtaining cross-country endorsement, silver distance, duration, height

Patrick Ashmore
Jared Chohan
Mike Jaworski*
Laura Martin
Sohrab Noshirwani
Amelia Richardson*
Martin Sloan
Steven Whalley

Standard Aerobatics Badge

Amelia Richardson*

**MGC member but achieved at another club*

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Wing Dolly for sale: fits either wing up to 65cm diameter. Folds for storage. £75
rob.k@blueyonder.co.uk

PLEASE NOTE: we always need lots of images for the newsletter and to use for club marketing. If you take any pictures around the club please send copies to jonmhall@me.com in the highest resolution you can, preferably with a caption referring to any of the people in the image. Any format will do.

By doing so it is assumed that you give permission for the images to be reproduced in print and on the internet without acknowledgement.

We especially want images of members laughing, smiling and generally having a good time!



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