

Final Glide 2019

Edited by Eifion Herbert



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Words From the Chair

Club chairman Martin looks back on 2019

As 2019 draws to a close we can look back on another successful year at OGC. We may not have had the amazing soaring weather that we enjoyed in 2018 but we have had lots of other highs to remember. Not least among them being the wonderful Christmas dinner that Dave and Vanessa put together in Bicester last weekend. It was great to see such a broad spectrum of our members there and to witness the friendly and cohesive atmosphere that envelopes this club.

One of my earliest memories from this year was when we learned from Alex Jenkins that the Talgarth club was looking to sell their K21. Having declared at the forum a few weeks before that we would be looking to move away from dependence on wooden gliders this seemed like too good an opportunity to pass up. A team was quickly put together to go and view the glider then we had a rapid whip-round to secure short term loans (later repaid from the Site Trust Fund) and EGZ became officially ours. She has become an essential member of our training fleet and significantly reduced our reliance on wood as per the plan. To complete the picture we were able to sell one of our K13s, CCE, shortly afterwards, leaving us with a varied training fleet. The fleet was further reduced a little later with the sale of Ka8 CYZ.

***“the weather
co-operated
brilliantly”***

I'm sure by now everyone has seen the new OGC website. Barry's work has done a great job for many years now but it was felt that we needed to modernise and generally update the site. We have the luxury of a small handful of very IT literate members who have done a truly professional job between them.

Another highlight of the year was the Open Day in June. Somehow our amazing marketing machine managed to sell just the right number of places and the weather co-operated brilliantly to enable us to hold a very successful and enjoyable day. Many thanks to those who helped make this happen. I'm sure this went some way to accounting for another outstanding number of new members joining the club. Welcome to all of you.

Around half way through the year we received an extremely generous donation from our President Sir Paul Nurse. This was as unexpected as it was generous so we had to find something worthy of such an investment. Pretty quickly we decided that our stalwart winch was where we should be looking. As a potential single point of failure for our entire operation it is essential that we maintain our winch in good working order and it was beginning to become a little tired in places. We already had plans to replace parts to keep it going but these were overhauled somewhat by Richard's offer to lead a project to renovate and upgrade the cable aspect of the winch and at the same time make it suitable for using Dyneema instead of the trusty steel cable we have always used. It's fair to say the Dyneema conversion had its doubters but with one weekend now behind us using the new cable I think it may soon convert even those with the biggest reservations.

***“Friendly and
cohesive”***

Those of you who were present at the AGM will recall how I struggled to produce a comprehensive list of people to thank. As we all know, OGC is an entirely volunteer run organisation and we would literally be nothing without the contributions of so many of you. As with my list of thank-yous I know my list of highlights is missing some stars. This just goes to show what a successful year we have had. In closing, I would like to

repeat my words from earlier that it is heart-warming to be a part of such a friendly and cohesive club. Thank you to everyone for their part in what we are.

Happy Christmas,

Martin.

CFI's Corner - FLARM and Lookout

by Neil Swinton

Over the winter period Flarm units will be fitted into the Ka8 and K13. This will mean almost the entire club fleet is equipped with these units. The K21 has been fitted with a Flarm unit since we had it, so most people will have flown with one, although quite possibly they have not fully understood the unit.

Hence it might be worth thinking about what a Flarm will, and won't do for you:-

Primarily, Flarm is very good at warning of possible collisions. It uses low power radio signals to communicate with other Flarms within range, and continually broadcasts its own position and a prediction of where it will be in a few seconds time. Other Flarms can receive this information, and if there is risk of a collision the units will attempt to warn the pilot.



Different Flarm units will warn in slightly different manners, but you can expect to see a red LED light on the unit in the direction of the nearest threat, and an increasingly frantic 'beeping' sound which will only stop when the collision risk is over.

Important Limitations

1. *Not every glider has a Flarm, and both gliders must have Flarm for it to work.*
2. *The direction of the indicated threat can sometimes differ a small amount from the actual threat*
3. *Although some powered-aircraft might be able to detect and avoid a Flarm-equipped glider, you will not be able to detect them.*

The best way to fly with a Flarm is to continue with your normal good lookout, without glancing at the Flarm. The lookout 'patter' as used by instructors is 'Scan the field of view, pausing from time to time, looking both above and below the horizon as well as on it'. This gives us a very good description of how you SHOULD be looking out at all times. Your eyes will almost certainly not detect an approaching aircraft unless you are looking in its immediate direction. So your head must move as you scan across and around. Looking carefully on the horizon is important, since aircraft will easily get lost in the 'clutter' of the horizon, and quite importantly, an aircraft that appears to be on the horizon, is at your height and may be collision risk. The pausing is to allow your eyes to re-focus correctly at 'distance' to give you more chance of seeing another

***“Looking out
at all times”***

aircraft. Your peripheral vision, that is ‘looking out of the corner of your eye’ is often quite good at spotting and alerting you to moving ‘things’. However, an aircraft which is on a collision course will NOT be moving relative to you, it will just get steadily bigger, and your brain will likely ignore it until it is much bigger.

So, we are flying along, doing our lookout, and the Flarm audible ‘beep’ warning starts sounding. Your first action MUST be to lookout for the threat, identify it and take avoiding action if needed. If you cannot see the other aircraft, then look down quickly at the Flarm display to see which direction it thinks the other aircraft is, then lookout again. You should also bear in mind that the aircraft you have just spotted and avoided may not be the one the Flarm has just warned you about!

***“Better than
the FLARM”***

Try to be better than the Flarm, by which I mean that you should be trying to spot all nearby aircraft well before the Flarm does.

The Flarm units we have also include loggers, so you may use them to record a silver height (gain of height of 1000m) for instance.

Instructor Updates

Darren ‘Blue’ Dowd has left us (and the RAF) to service Hawks in the middle east – we thank him for his efforts over the past two years. Paul Howard is helping us out with some trial flight visitors. We do have a couple of members who will start training next year once they have a little bit more experience.

Yearly Refresher Flights

Every solo pilot must have a session of refresher flights, each year. I would recommend you get them out of the way when it is cold and windy, so they won’t get in the way of a good soaring day when the fine weather does eventually come back. Your instructor will typically want 2 or 3 flights, and it should include a cable-break practice, and some stalling and spinning.

Thanks to everyone for making 2019 another safe year at OGC!

Motorgliders

Young Ben's descent to the dark side

At the start of this year I was thinking about what I wanted to do with my flying hobby, knowing full well that there were two options that I was considering. One was to push forward into the world of instructing and the other was to work my way into the “dark side” of aviation and get my powered license.

Much to the chagrin of Neil the CFI I chose the latter and started researching how I could go about getting a powered license. Barry Taylor wrote an excellent article in *Final Glide* 36 about the different licenses available, which provided an invaluable source of information for me when I was looking into this. With some knowledge of the various licenses available to me, I contacted several flight schools in Southern England to try and work out what would be the best course of action. Unsurprisingly the more expensive schools seemed very keen to stick me in a PA28 spam can and get a PPL with little to no consideration of my previous gliding experience. Some however, suggested the LAPL may be an appropriate option, and would be possible at a considerably cheaper price tag than the £9k required for a PPL.

MotorGlide was one of the schools I contacted. Started in 2014 and one that I'd been aware of through other glider pilots on Facebook and through other media (I think the OGC twitter account had been following them since the early days!) A very friendly Lee emailed me back and we talked through the process of getting a powered license.



We agreed that the best route for me to get myself into a powered aircraft would be mildly more complicated but should save me a considerable amount of money. First, I would convert my BGA license (Bronze and XC endorsement) to a LAPL (S). This was a relatively simple paperwork exercise, though it required a medical. The old-style GP endorsed medical isn't valid in this process, nor is there an option to self-declare. The options are a GP medical, which differs from the

“endorsed” medical in that there's an actual (albeit limited) fitness exam as opposed to just the GP ticking a box to say that you're fit enough to drive a car, or the official Class 1 or 2 medical.

Having transferred GP surgeries to my new London one, I wasn't convinced that they understood what a LAPL medical was and expected the GP to likely refer me onto an AME (AeroMedical Examiner) but charge me anyway. I'd then have to pay the AME for an assessment, likely taking me over the costs of just getting a Class 2 medical in the first place. I found the first available appointment and made my way to Redhill in Surrey on a rainy morning and chatted to an AME about all my medical history. It also involved an ECG, visual and audio testing amongst other assessments. To tell you the truth I think I annoyed her by trying to interpret my results before she told me, but to be fair to myself I was meant to be revising for my first university exams!

Having paid the AME I took my shiny new medical, completed some paperwork and sent it all off to the BGA to eagerly await my new license.

A couple of weeks later I noticed my application fee had been taken out of my account, and a few days later my shiny new “CAA Flight Crew License” arrived in the post in a lovely blue and brass cover. Having gloated to my friends that I was now an “official pilot” (the BGA certificate whilst lovely doesn’t look very official) I eagerly awaited my first session of training at Enstone “North side” Grass.

“New stats and scary ideas”

On my first day of flying I looked out the window before leaving and was greeted by a windy day with overcast skies. Nevertheless, I was determined to get to Enstone to find out if I was to fly. What I discovered was something I doubt any glider pilot at Weston has ever had to deal with before – the wind was in the wrong direction! With a cross wind limit of 13 knots the Falkes were out of service and flying was scrubbed. My instructor, Dan, however was enthusiastic and wanted to ensure that I wouldn’t leave without gaining at least some knowledge. We spent two and a half hours in “the office” going

through all the new theory I’d need to learn, FREDA and HASEL (not to be confused with HASSLL) and my shopping list. Leaving with my head full of new stats and scary ideas such as talking to ATSU (Air Traffic Service Units) and deliberately going through airspace (!) I headed to AFE at Kidlington and bought a “whirly wheel”, kneeboard and set of PLOGS (Pilot LOGs).

The second day I had booked was also scrubbed, though this time before I even left home. Beginning to worry about the very short time frame I had, I began to wonder if this was indeed something, I’d be able to achieve. I did however complete the homework requested of me and planned a flight to Turweston utilising visible landmarks and dutifully filled in a PLOG.

On the third day I was delighted to wake up to much better weather. With visibility still not amazing but certainly flyable we took off as soon as we could and headed to Turweston for a spot of lunch. Bumbling along in a straight line without having to worry about finding thermals to turn in every so often was certainly an alien experience, though in all honesty I was more worried about the concept of speaking on the dreaded radio.

We completed several exercises above and around Barford St John, a disused airfield between Enstone and Banbury, which would later become a homing beacon for me on later flights. After landing I was told that whilst someone had booked the aircraft for about an hour and a half, I’d be able to fly again that evening if I stuck around, which I was pleased to hear.

Later that evening I had a couple more flights with Dan and then one flight with Lee, the head of training and incredibly helpful person I’d been communicating with earlier in the year. We landed and taxied back to the parking area, but as we popped the canopy up onto its stop and started unclipping ourselves from the harness, Lee turned to me and offered me the opportunity to take the aircraft solo! That evening I went for my second aviation solo, a short circuit around and above Soho farmhouse before coming back and touching down at Enstone.

In the next two weeks I completed a solo navigational flight to Leicester airfield and back along with a few more hours training and a skills test, before sending a stack of paperwork off to the CAA along with yet more “admin fees”, and a few weeks later I received a piece of paper certifying my LAPL(S) & TMG license as complete.



Ben over Brize, keeping a good lookout for intercepting Typhoons, even though ATC had cleared his transit

Since then I've flown just shy of 15 hours, including a flight around Birmingham zone, down to Goodwood and back, and one of my favourite flying experiences yet of flying my Dad around the skies of Oxfordshire for an hour and a half, about which he hasn't stopped talking!

I'd thoroughly recommend learning to fly motor gliders with MotorGlide, the team there have been helpful and friendly throughout, and offer some of the cheapest powered aircraft prices without letting the standard of instruction drop at all.

WHAT IS THE OXFORD GLIDING COMPANY?

by Phil Hawkins, Company Chairman

The Club taught me to fly 45 years ago in 1974, and some of you are going through that life-changing experience just now. We come to the airfield to fly in Club aircraft, enjoy the facilities provided by the Club, and work (well, hopefully most of us do) to ensure the Club's future.

So where does the Company come in? How does it relate to your Club?

The Club had its first flying season in 1938, having been started up with the aid of a small bank overdraft, but by the end of that year it was in severe financial difficulties. Two men made the decision to put the Club onto a more secure financial footing by investing their own cash to create a Limited Company, run by a board of Directors, which would own the Club and direct its affairs. These men were firstly the well-known gliding pioneer Robert Kronfeld, who had been acting as the Club's first CFI in the 1938 season, and secondly John McGown, who was the proprietor of the Lambert Arms public house in Aston Rowant. At that time the Club operated from a field at the back of the pub, near the base of the Chiltern ridge, and no doubt McGown saw the investment partly as a way of expanding his business.

Between them these two men gave £4,000 to create the Company and take over the debts owed by the Club. This was a very substantial commitment when you realise this is equivalent to more than £250,000 today. Had they known at the beginning of 1939 they would only have one gliding season in which to enjoy the benefits, they might well have decided otherwise!

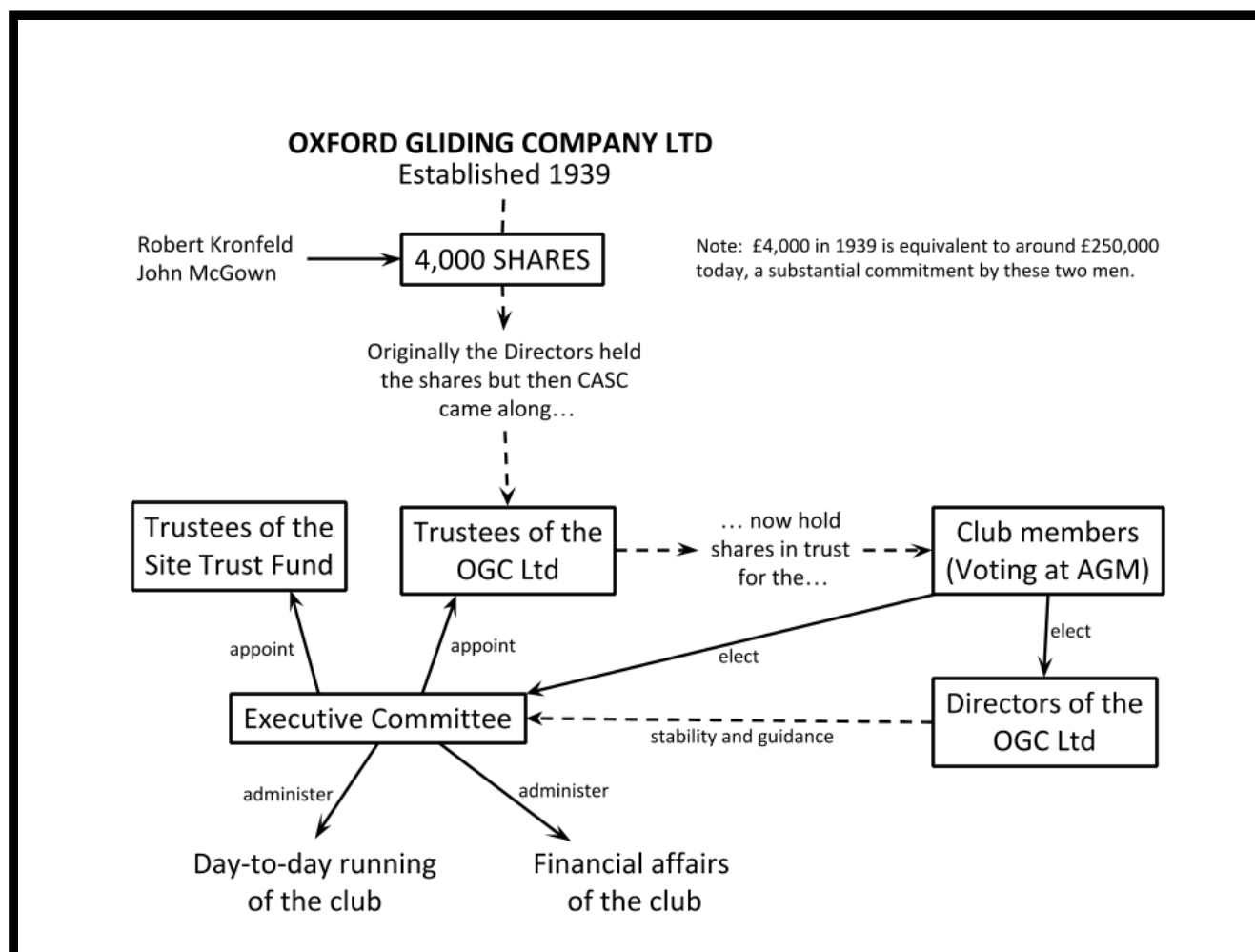
By 1948 both men were dead, and it fell to another man to revive the Club's fortunes. The solicitor Lawrie Wingfield is the only known connection between the pre-war and post-war lives of the Club, having been the legal owner of the Lambert Arms for a short time following McGown's death, and discussing with Kronfeld's widow Margaret how best to create a lasting memorial to him. We have her to thank for this momentous response "Re-start the Oxford Gliding Club."

**"Restart Oxford
Gliding Club"**

Since the 1950s, and until very recently, the original 4,000 shares were divided more or less equally between the Directors of the Company. Lawrie Wingfield had set up an arrangement whereby a group of Trustees would be elected annually by Club members at the AGM, and these Company Trustees would be responsible for appointing Directors and allocating shares to them. In practice each Trustee became a Director, but there was no hard and fast rule to ensure that, and the Trustees could in theory have allocated Directorships to anyone they thought suitable.

This system continued well into the 1970s and 1980s, and I remember from my early years at the Club how mysterious the annual election of Company Trustees had become. Indeed, later in the 1990s it was the practice to short-cut the procedure and ask the AGM voters to elect the Directors instead. This wasn't strictly correct but nobody minded.

Fast forward to the current decade, when CASC necessitated a basic reorganization. Under the rules of a Community Amateur Sports Club it is a requirement that each member has a voting share in the parent Company. The existing Directors were asked to return their shares to a central pool, and it was initially thought that each member would be allocated one share from the pool for as long as he or she remained a member. However, it became clear this would involve excessive paperwork and expense with issuing share certificates to new members, and cancelling certificates for members who were deemed to have left. Instead, a halfway house solution is now in place, which satisfies the requirements of CASC whilst keeping paperwork to a minimum.



The shares will be held by a group of Trustees on behalf of the members. CASC rules dictate that each Trustee cannot hold more than 20% of the share allocation, which means we need five Trustees. It does not mean we have a Trust as a separate legal entity similar to the Site Trust Fund, it's just a legal device to allow the shares to be held on trust for the members whilst not affecting their voting rights.

During our 2019 Directors Meeting we agreed that in future the AGM voters should elect the Company Directors rather than the Company Trustees as previously. It was thought more acceptable to CASC (and seemed more logical to us) if the Club members are in control of who operates the Company, in the same way they are in control of who serves on the Committee.

This means that the Committee will now be responsible for appointing Company Trustees in the same way they were formerly responsible for appointing the Trustees of the Site Trust Fund. The Committee could, for example, decide to appoint each Director as a suitable Trustee, but that will be their choice, not the Directors' choice. These appointments

“No empire building”

should be minuted, preferably at the first meeting of the new Committee following the AGM each year.

It is very important to appreciate that Club members voting at the AGM are electing both the Directors and the Committee in separate elections. The Directors have no control over who serves on the Committee, and the Committee have no control over who becomes a Director. No empire-building here!

The Committee will continue to be responsible for the day-to-day running of the Club, and for the financial affairs of the Club. Remember that the aircraft, vehicles and all assets that we think of as belonging to the Club actually belong to the Company, but the Directors delegate responsibility for their upkeep to the Committee. The only connection between the Directors and the Committee is one of guidance and stability. Committee posts tend to change from year to year, whereas the Directors are usually there for the long term and can provide advice based on experience when needed. I've been a Director for about 30 years now, and despite living in Scotland and serving on the Committee of a different Club, I retain a keen interest in the future wellbeing of the OGC and its members.

For the 2020 season the Directors are:

PHIL HAWKINS: I joined the Club in 1974 and was an active member for 36 years before moving to Scotland in 2011. I served on the Committee in the 1970s and 1980s including a three-year term as Treasurer, I was a competition pilot at Regional and National level, and I'm a Gold C badge holder with two Diamonds. I'm now the Secretary of the Cairngorm GC at Feshiebridge, but I owe a continuing debt of gratitude to the Oxford GC.

PETER BROOKS: Joined the Club in 1964 although he had previously completed an ATC gliding course at White Waltham in 1957. He has many years' instructing experience and has also served terms on the Committee as Chairman and CFI. He too is a Gold C badge holder.

PAUL MORRISON: Joined the club in 1989 and is an Assistant Category Instructor with circa 1,800hrs in gliders and various powered aircraft. He enjoys cross country flying (although admits he's not very good at it) and has completed several 300km flights including one 430km. He served on the Committee as Chairman for ten years (2007-2017).

GORDON CRAIG: Joined the Club in 1978, although he had been solo in 1973 with the Air Cadets. He served on the Committee in the 1980s including a term as Secretary. He holds a Full Category Instructor rating and also an Inspector rating. He favours cross country flying and Regional competitions and is currently the Club's Technical Officer.

PAUL SMITH: joined the Club in 2005 after a trial lesson. A keen cross country pilot completing all three diamonds in 2016. Joint holder of the club distance record flying 4 x 500s off consecutive winch launches in 2018. First to complete the adventurous o/r to St Catherine's Point lighthouse. Enjoys adventure flying in the Alps, Scotland, Talgarth and Denbigh. Assistant Category Instructor for 10 years, previous Club Secretary (2008) and Treasurer (2009-2012) and returning Treasurer since 2018.

The Tuesday Evening Crew

by Geoff Jones

Our gliders are maintained by a group of members who meet up at the club most Tuesday evenings. They have worked together for many years and it is a pleasure to see how well they work as a team. If we didn't have our own inspectors club fees would be higher as we would have to get our gliders maintained and inspected by a professional glider maintenance company.



Gliders are completely stripped down for their annual checks. They are carefully inspected by our own BGA qualified inspectors and repaired as necessary. A new system of inspection has recently been introduced by the BGA. I have seen Nick, Haste and Gordon discussing the intricacies and implications of the new system and its associated paperwork. Gliders are also repaired if they develop any problems during the year and are returned to service as quickly as possible.

All work done has to be inspected and signed off.

I have seen a clever repair by Gordon, Richard and Peter working together to fix a problem on the K21 main wheel. I saw Haste and Richard working together to fit a radio into Daisy. I was there when CGO was put back together by the team after its annual. I managed to get permission to fly with Martin Brown when he flew CGO's check flight the following Saturday.



The latest glider to come in for its annual is the K21. This is the first time this type has been through the workshop so Gordon has been working out the checks required.



K21 Wings safely stored in Main Hangar, ready to be moved into the glider workshop for checking and a polish.



We rely on the senior members of the Tuesday Team and they are an important part of our club. They work away quietly, unseen by most of us, so it's good to have a glimpse of what they do for us.



If you are interested in becoming involved with glider maintenance on a Tuesday evening please talk to one of our inspectors Graham, Haste, Nick or Gordon.

An Edge on the Edge

by Jonathan Edge

I attended three days of the one-week gliding course at Long Mynd airfield from the 23rd of September until the 25th. Long Mynd is an airfield on top of a plateau, roughly 700 feet above the valleys below. They have a westerly facing Ridge, which allows one to do ridge flying when the wind is coming from approximately the West and it has a strength of at least 15 kn. Relatively strong wind speeds are required in order to stay significantly above the ridge, for example, as a beginner in ridge flying I was told I needed to come in to land when I reached 600 feet above the airfield. In order to maintain a height of at least 600 feet, a relatively strong wind is required. If one were to fall below 600ft, and not be able to get back up again, there are a couple of convenient fields in the valley below, but landing there would entail for the inconvenience and potential dangers of a field landing.



This was my first real experience in ridge flying and I can assert that ridge flying is very pleasant. When the ridge is working, that is the wind is blowing sufficiently strongly and from the right direction, one can comfortably be at 700 feet over the ridge for a long time without having to constantly fret about having to land. One can be pretty confident that one will be able to maintain pretty much that height. This is quite a different experience from soaring in thermals where if you have reached even 1500 feet, it may not be obvious where the next thermal is to be found and chances are one will be back on the ground relatively quickly. So in that respect this was a very different experience. It was possible to be at relatively low height and still simply enjoy flying around without thinking one is going to land again very quickly.

Another pleasant aspect from my point of view was that you can simply go up and down the ridge, mostly flying in straight lines. It is not necessary to turn constantly in order to stay in a thermal, simply performing a

180° turn roughly every minute or so is enough to stay on the ridge and thus stay in the lift. If one has a tendency to get motion sick, this is a very pleasant aspect of ridge flying. The downside might be that after a couple of hours of doing this it might get quite boring since there isn't quite the same challenge of having to constantly figure out where the core of the thermal is and readjusting the circle one is flying in order to stay in it.

In the following I will describe the three days I had. I suspect that given it was September, these might be taken to be somewhat typical of the experience one might have.

Monday:

We were able to fly in the morning, roughly half a day. The wind came from the East, so the ridge was not working, but some soaring was possible. The actual kind of flying was very similar to what we would do at Weston on the Green, with the big difference that the views were really magnificent. At first I couldn't quite believe what I was able to see from above, it just looks very pretty. That is despite the fact that I have been on walking trips to that area, so I am somewhat familiar with the hills in Shropshire. The weather wasn't exactly fantastic, but it was enough to stay up for about 25 min, so I did have a rather nice flight. Because the ridge was not working, we were flying the circuit just like we would on any flat site, so in principle everything was very similar to Weston on the Green. The difference was that because the ground was not flat and the ground at the point where one begins the final approach is about 150 feet higher than the landing area, the final turn feels very low, despite the fact that it isn't. So there are a couple of things to get used to and it is good practice to do those circuits, but actually they are not any harder than what we would do at Weston on the Green. They are not quite as flexible with their takeoff and landing directions, so one also has to deal with a bit of a crosswind, but that also provides for some good training in crosswind landing.



Tuesday:

We only had a relatively short window for flying in the afternoon. The rest of the time it was either raining or the cloud base was so low that even the airfield was often already in cloud. When the cloud base did rise, I had my first ridge soaring flight with an instructor. We stayed up for about half an hour and it was great to be shown how to fly on the ridge and what to watch out for. One of the things I thought was really impressive was that by adjusting one's flying speed one is able to adjust the height at which one flies.

The ridge was working relatively well and so initially we were flying at a constant height of about 800 or 900 feet at about 45 kn (in a K 21). I was then asked to fly first at 60 and then 70 kn at which higher speeds we then simply maintained lower heights above the ridge. This is because the closer you get to the ridge the stronger the updraught you experience, so the more you can compensate for the higher rate of descent at higher speeds. At each speed you will then find the height at which you will neither go up nor go down, assuming of course that the ridge properties don't change.

By going progressively faster we eventually were going at about 400 or 500 feet above the ridge. We then reduced our speed again and promptly re-gained our previous height of 800 feet above the reach, and as we continued to maintain that height it wasn't simply a matter of converting kinetic energy back into potential energy. I thought this was really quite impressive demonstration. I was also told that when flying solo I would have to maintain at least 600 feet above the ridge, which is the reason why the wind has to be quite strong in order for ridge flying to be possible at Long Mynd. If one were to fly at the height of the hill, much lower wind speeds would be required to maintain one's height, but then of course one would not have anywhere to land, other than the fields in the valley below.



The other fun thing I learned that day was that it is, after all, possible to do a go around procedure in a glider. The circuit from the ridge is a little bit unusual, so I had to practice it with the instructor. After doing most of the circuit, the instructor asked me to use the road at the end of the airfield as my reference point, which I thought was a little bit odd, but I went with it. When it was clear that we were going to overshoot the airfield, I was asked to close the air brakes and we then went back over the ridge and continued ridge soaring until we

had gained enough height to attempt another circuit. That was a fun thing to do and good to know how to react if one notices that one is coming in too high (particularly useful since their field is rather short in the direction in which you land when the ridge is working). Overall this was a very short day, but I did at least get one enjoyable flight in which I learned quite a lot.

Wednesday:

We spent all morning in the clubhouse waiting for the weather to clear and finally at about 13:30 were able to start flying. By this point I had done enough flights with the instructor for them to send me solo. The ridge was working, although only just about, and I had one flight of about an hour and another one of about half

an hour going up and down the ridge. I really enjoyed those flights; it was just fantastic sitting on the ridge, going up and down and enjoying the view, with a relatively low workload. The workload principally consisted of keeping a good look out since there were by that point several other gliders flying along the ridge.

The K23 is a very nice glider to fly, it is very easy to fly and, most importantly for me, one has lots of space. It is the single seater equivalent to the K21 and as far as I could tell, it handles in a very similar way. On the other hand, just like the K21, it may just be a little bit too easy to fly and therefore a little unexciting. I think one learns more when flying the Astir, since one has to spend more effort on speed control and it is also more responsive to the control inputs. So I think it is very pleasant to fly but it is not my ideal aeroplane.

***“pleasant
to fly”***

Due to the characteristics of ridge soaring I could imagine that the Long Mynd is a very good place to do one's five-hour flight. I was actually hoping to be able to do it while I was at the Long Mynd, but the weather was simply not good enough. I also think doing a five-hour flight in the K23 would be really quite pleasant since it is so much more comfortable than an Astir, let alone a K13 (and I cannot even comment on the K8, since I don't even fit into it). On Wednesday I had six flights in total; two cable break exercises and four flights in the K23.

For me it was ultimately worth going since I got to experience ridge soaring and got to have several solo flights. That said, we spent a lot of time hanging around in the clubhouse, waiting for the weather to improve. By about Wednesday lunchtime I was getting pretty frustrated and thought I had basically wasted three days of vacation. It was the Wednesday afternoon that provided the redeeming experience and which made the whole excursion worth it.

***“very glad
I went”***

Another factor to consider is that it is fairly expensive, at about £100 a day, plus of course food and accommodation. For the amount of flying I ultimately did, £300 was not exactly cheap, but it proved to be a great experience in the end. The other thing is that this kind of weather is probably what we need to expect in England. It was probably roughly what one can expect and I ended up flying a typical amount. I would probably go again, but maybe I would be a little bit more

choosy about the season, choosing a season where the probability of having more good days might be a little bit higher, though of course one might still be lucky or unlucky. For now, I am very glad I went though.

Notes from a 'Newbie'

By Geoff Stephens

I joined Oxford Gliding Club early in 2019 after retirement from work. I was looking for a challenging mental and physical activity conducted in a social environment and can honestly say that gliding ticks all these boxes. Although still on my way to qualifying as a solo pilot, I have enjoyed learning the principles of flight, flying in thermals of up to 4,000 ft above Weston-on-the-Green, ridge flying on a club expedition to the Black Mountains and learning how to 'read the sky'.



On the social side, I have enjoyed mixing with people from all walks of life and from all age groups. In particular, the professionalism of the instructors has impressed me, as well as being regaled with the experiences of some of the 'old hands'.

Going solo is my next challenge, but there is so much that lies beyond: cross-country flying; progressive badges for distance, height and endurance; and the chance to join expeditions to fly in interesting parts of the country and elsewhere.

To anyone thinking of taking up gliding at Oxford Gliding Club, or of buying a voucher for a friend, I can confidently say 'don't hesitate'.



Inter-club League 2019 Report

by Dave Bray

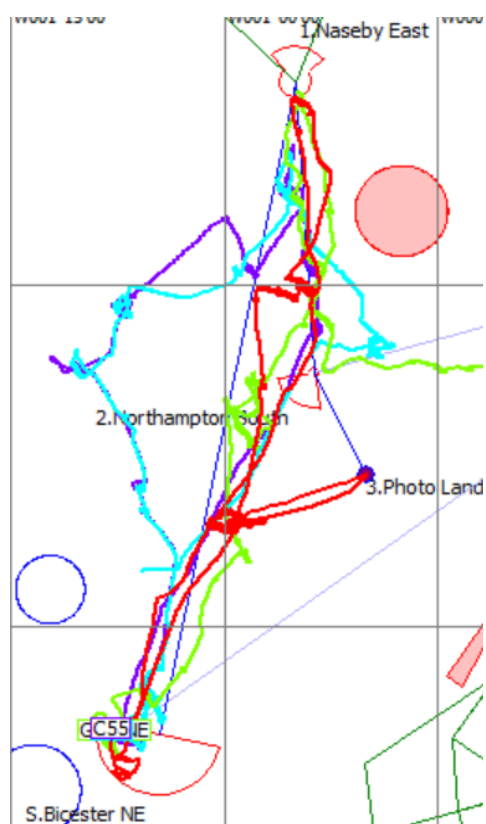
This year the inter club league was hosted by Bicester and saw the inclusion of a very enthusiastic team from Shalbourne GC who are based at Rivar Hill. We continued the same format as the year before a single weekend with unlimited entries in the Novice and Intermediate classes, the Pundits being limited to two per club.

The OGC team for the weekend consisted of:

Novice	Cecilia Craig & Ben Vickars
Intermediate	George Crawford
Pundit	Dave Bray
2 Seater	Gordon Craig & Ian Rodway

The weather was not ideal for the weekend with no classic racing days and with those taking winch launches struggling to connect to the climbs needed to get away. However we had contest days on all three days - perhaps a record for a Bank Holiday weekend!

Saturday was the best day for distance, but too windy for the Novices so the Intermediates and Pundits were the only classes scoring. Unfortunately Oxford didn't have a team that day so while the Intermediates flew 258km and the Pundits 303km the points were shared between new boys Shalbourne and Bicester.



Sunday saw tasks in all three classes, The Novices set 121km, the Intermediates 193km and the Pundits 239km. George has a knack for staying airborne when others can't and so it proved on this day, with the other pilots all landing out at various airfields. George returned to the airfield after the first two turn points which saved a retrieve, plus we'd got a point on the board! Ben was Winch launching the Astir from Weston and in a day where most took aerotows from Bicester, he wasn't able to get away.

Monday saw the first full team for Oxford and the day was a very interesting one with thermals spaced far apart - although fairly strong and going to 4500'. The Novices and Intermediates weren't able to cross the gaps between thermals and so as no one passed the minimum distance (20km and 40km) it was left to the pundits to see what they could do. The Bicester pundit flew the 150km although his tale of his first glide out from Bicester all the way to Abingdon before he found a climb showed just how having a top of the range glider can help. second place was the Shalbourne pilot who completed 110km. I flew down to Oxford and since the sky was devoid of anything resembling lift I flew home having only managed 20km.... However, it was our second point on the board!

Traces of the Sunday Intermediate task. OGC pilot (George) - Red, Bicester pilots - Light Blue and Purple, Shalbourne pilot - Green.

In the end Bicester (16) beat Shalbourne (14) by two points with Oxford (2) bringing up the rear. Not a place we've been used to over the years and something I'd very much like to correct in 2020. However, just joining in and being part of the weekend was great fun so thank you to those club members who put themselves forward, and better luck next time!

Historically, the novice task of the inter club league has been a great way to experience flying a cross country with multiple gliders on the route helping each other with those early days of leaving the confines of the airfield. If you would like to participate in 2020 then please let me know - I hope more of us will be able to take up the opportunity of having other gliders in the air to learn how it's done, as well as sharing in the post flying BBQ and tales of "How I dun it".

The Simpson Trophy

Detective Dave Bray investigates the club's oldest award

The club's oldest award, The Simpson Trophy, had an overhaul this year as nearly 60 years of exuberant polishing had removed the silver plate turning it into a brass cup. On top of this, some rather enthusiastic celebrations after AGMs in bygone years had left it looking less than perfect with the lid no longer fitting. Thanks to funding from the OGC Social Club, it was shipped off to a specialist in Somerset where the dents and scratches were removed, the lid hammered back into shape, the engraving redone and the whole trophy replated in silver.

While it was there, it has also had a new plinth added as there were only another 3 or 4 years of space left for names on the original. The finished trophy looks fantastic and all this work means that it is good to be treasured by the club and its recipients for many more years to come.

The Simpson Trophy is awarded each year after the AGM for the "Most outstanding flight from the site of the Oxford Gliding Club" It has been awarded 53 times over the last 59 years with 35 different winners. Previous winners have completed flights to Wales, the Isle of White as well as various 300 and 500km tasks. My current research suggests it was first awarded to Derek Barrett in 1961, who persevered on a day when others couldn't and achieved a flight time of 5 hours and 1 minute for his Silver duration, completing his Silver C badge.

Documents inherited when I took over the Secretary position indicate that the Simpson Trophy was donated to the club in June 1961 by "Chris Simpson who was a keen member in the 1950s". Having talked about this with two of our members from this era, it might be that it was in fact a Ron G. Simpson who donated the award! Trawling the archive gliding magazines from 1952 to 1961, there are at least three "C. Simpsons" mentioned, as well as Ron G. Simpson, who earned his Silver badge in July 1962 and was a member of the committee in 1961. The BGA have supplied me with a record of a "Chris Robert Simpson" who ended up as the BGA chairman in the 1970s. Is this the same gentleman? I don't believe so but I shall continue to research and document the histories of the club's awards and the flights for which they were given and hopefully will have some more information in the near future.

Airspace News

by Paul Morrison (Club Airspace Officer)

‘Gliding Needs Airspace’ was the phrase coined by the European Gliding Union (EGU) several years ago and this remains the case now if not arguably more so.

If you asked the lay person in the street what they thought about ‘airspace’ as well as probably looking at you rather oddly, they’d be blissfully unaware of the battle that is taking place for the very air that surrounds them. They’d certainly be unaware of the ‘Tetris like’ puzzle of interlocking invisible blocks that extends above their heads and arguably why should they be?

Airspace like so many commodities on the planet that we call home is a finite resource and it needs to be managed and shared as such. But sadly, this is not what is currently happening with the CAA as Regulator not seeing its role as such. We are therefore in something akin to a gold rush situation with airport owners and operators seeing a benefit in being able to control access to parts of the sky that they can commercially exploit, often under the guise of safety and rushing to grab it.

Those of us in aviation are aware of the ever increasing demand for airspace driven often by a desire for efficiency and commercial advantage and are broadly aware of the ‘Airspace Change Process’ even if they are unable to quote the relevant CAP number (CAP1616 incidentally!) but what many do not know is the many fronts that this battle is being fought on.

“Increasing demand”

At the time of writing there are approximately 180 Airspace Change Proposals (ACPs) that have been submitted to the CAA for **permanent** changes to the existing airspace arrangements. My emphasis here is deliberate as it has recently been recognised that whilst the CAA has the statutory power to grant a change to airspace via the ACP process, it does not have the ability to revoke it!

So what does this have to do with us at OGC?

The simple answer is quite a lot really as whilst we are fortunate to be based at one of if not the largest grass airfield in Central / Southern England, it does also mean that we are also located at what has been described by the BGA as ‘the crossroads’ of Gliding in the UK and I don’t think they meant a dodgy motel with wobbly walls from the seventies.

RAF Weston-on-the-Green is situated in the ‘Oxfordshire Area of Intensive Aerial Activity’ which was established to recognise the unique mix of military, commercial, GA and other air sports that exist in this location. It is also bordered to the south west by the RAF’s only remaining air transport base which is the hub for its global operations’ and you don’t have to go too far south east to encounter one of the world’s largest airports. Much closer to home we have what started as a WW2 training airfield but now has aspirations of grandeur as evidenced by its name – London Oxford Airport.

Unless you are very new to the hobby or have been in denial (other rivers are available!), you will probably be aware of the ‘battle’ that has taken place recently and which was led by Lasham Gliding Society in respect of the ACP submitted by TAG aviation for controlled airspace (CAT) around Lasham. Sadly, this resulted in an expensive Judicial Review which Lasham lost just as TAG sold the airport (and its new airspace) to a new buyer! Cynical – Moi?

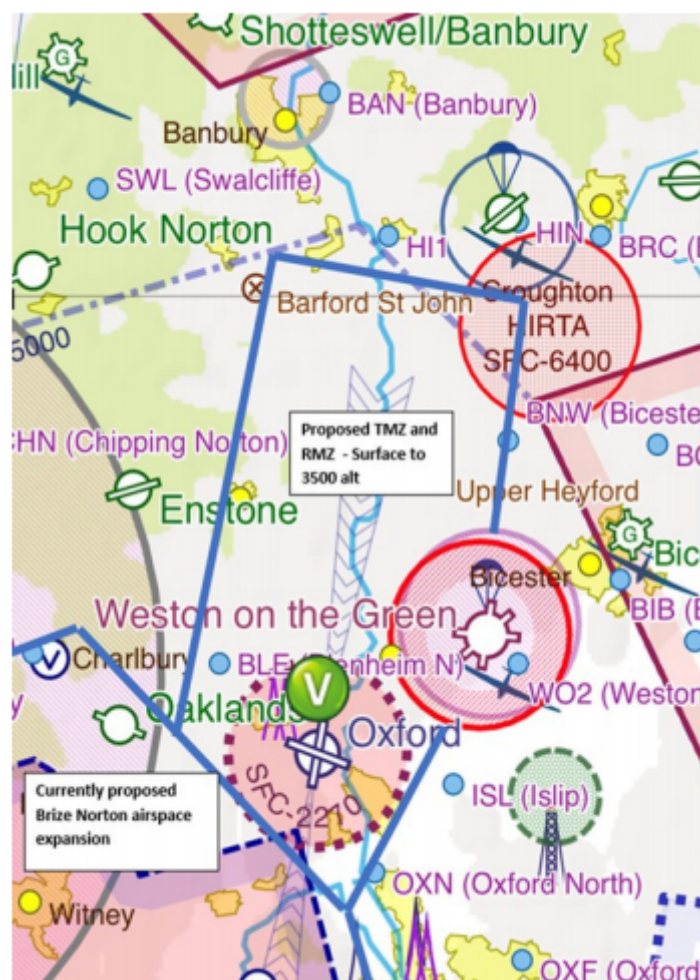
So we now have a new swathe of CAT in the south of England almost abutting the London Terminal Control Area. Notwithstanding this, our neighbours at both RAF Brize Norton (BZN) and London Oxford Airport (LOA) have over the last two years also submitted their own ACPs for permanent changes to the airspace around them and therefore I want to bring you up to speed on these as both have now concluded their formal consultative phase.

Other ACPs which will impact those of us who fly cross-country or at other sites are also out there but I will focus on those geographically closest to us in this update.

London Oxford Airport

LOA & Osprey Consulting (who are the airspace experts submitting the ACP on their behalf) recently held a stakeholder meeting where they set out the details of their current proposal following the conclusion of the formal consultation earlier this year. I would encourage you to visit the LOA website (<https://www.oxfordairport.co.uk/>) to keep abreast of developments but they are not always the quickest to update this!

In precis what they are now proposing is an alternative to the Class D originally proposed and now comprises a box of CAT to the north of Kidlington as shown on the image below.



Precisely what classification this airspace will be remains the subject of some debate, but as LOA are seeking to justify this in order to create a 'known traffic environment' for aircraft carrying out commercially lucrative IFR training flights onto runway 19, it is currently proposed to be a TMZ/RMZ from surface to 3,500'.

So what does a 'Transponder Mandatory Zone' & 'Radio Mandatory Zone' mean? The intention is that aircraft (including gliders) suitably equipped with a Mode S Transponder will be able to enter the area provided that they are squawking the published Transponder Code (4517 currently) without seeking permission. Aircraft / gliders without a Transponder can only enter the area once they have established two-way radio communications with LOA who will be controlling this area.

This is a subtle nuance as whilst strictly speaking you do not need LOA's express permission to enter the airspace, you can only do so under RMZ rules once you have established two-way communication which in practice means you calling and LOA acknowledging. In busy time if you cannot get a word in, they do not reply or

they do so with a 'standby' message then the contact has not been met and it is a criminal offence, punishable by prosecution under the Air Navigation Order if you enter that airspace.

So how will this impact OGC's operations you may ask? This will obviously be of greatest impact to those pilots who fly cross-country tasks but you can see that with this abutting the D129 Danger Area over and around WOTG, even students and those who fly locally are often in the area proposed to become the RMZ /

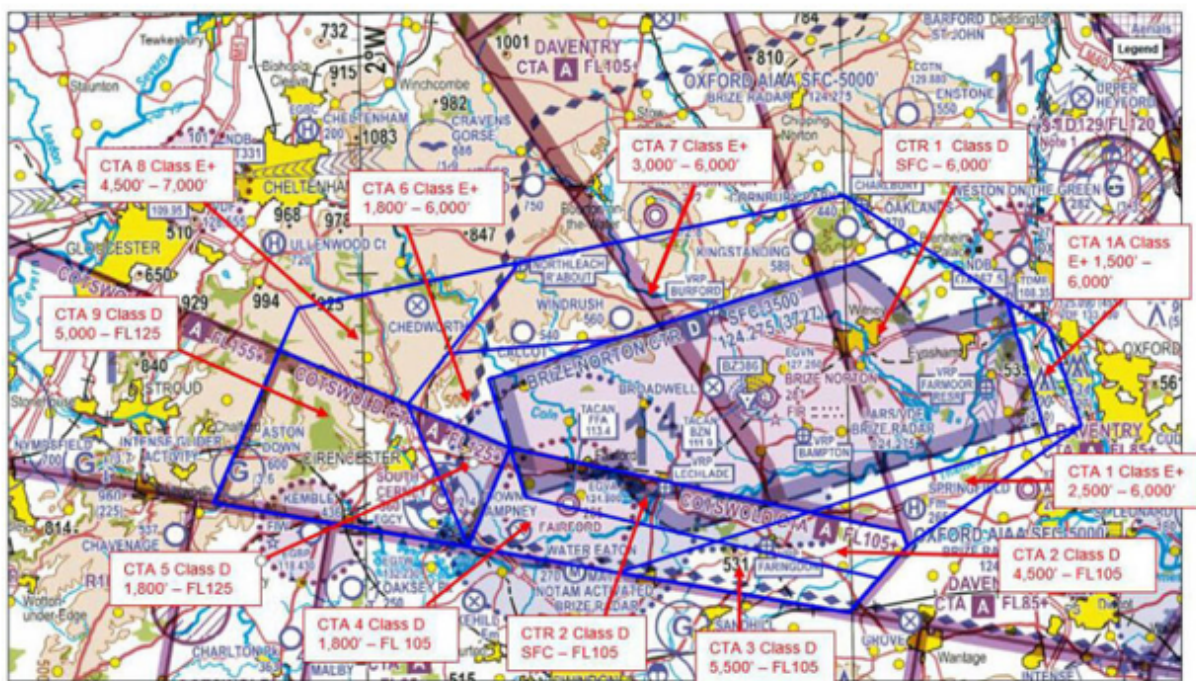
TMZ. Potentially before an OGC pilot can leave the circuit at the top of a launch to head any direction other than east, they will need to have established two-way communication with LOA as currently proposed. It is fair to say that both LOA and Osprey received frank and direct feedback from those present at the Stakeholder event where both OGC and the BGA were represented. They were left in no doubt as to the concerns raised about this both to gliders and aircraft who may wish to transit it but also those seeking to route around it in order to avoid the need to transit. It is readily apparent that the risk of infringements to both D129 and Hinton in the Hedges will be greatly increased as a result.

LOA & Osprey have agreed to take away the feedback they received and whilst they are under no statutory or regulatory obligation to do so, have agreed to reconsider their proposal in light of this. They have indicated that they are intending to submit their final proposal, which may or may not differ from the above, to the CAA in Q1 2020 for a decision.

In parallel to this, OGC is engaged with LOA, the BGA and other air sport representatives about how best our respective interests can be protected. LOA are seemingly quite receptive to the idea of 'Letters of Agreement' that can be put in place with OGC in order that our access to this can be assured provided certain criteria are met and also there is talk of a 'Gliding Box' that could be established to the east of their runway centreline overhead Upper Heyford area and activated when necessary which would reduce the need for interaction with LOA controllers.

RAF Brize Norton

It is fair to say that the BZN ACP whilst of concern to cross-country pilots is of less impact and thus concern to OGC for local flights. The proposal is more complex than that proposed for LOA as you can see from the image below.



For those familiar with the 'Brize Zone' as it currently stands you can appreciate that it is proposed to increase in size considerably, particularly to the west, with areas of 'hanging' airspace in all directions. It is also proposed to expand to the east too and the section between Farmoor and Oxford will be something we would need to be aware of if you are in this area between 1,500' and 6,000' AGL.

The keen eyed amongst you will notice that in addition to Class D airspace, some of this is proposed to be Class E+. This is a relatively new concept of classification and my understanding is that this is akin to a TMZ in so far as that aircraft and gliders can operate within this under VFR rules without an express clearance

PROVIDED THAT they have a functioning Mode S Transponder. Again, this will be a barrier to many glider pilots currently and none of the OGC Club fleet is Transponder equipped.

Much like the LOA ACP, BZN and Osprey have completed the formal consultative phase and they are under no obligation to do anything further. However, they have agreed to reconsider the feedback they have received before they submit their final proposal to the CAA for a decision in mid-2020. It is clear from the complexity of the current proposal with differing classifications of airspace at different heights that keeping it simple to avoid infringements was not a prerequisite for the design!

To conclude therefore, I hope you can appreciate that there is a lot going on to keep your Committee members and Club Officers busy. It is encouraging that recently the reform of UK Airspace was expressed to be a top priority for the Government with no lesser than the Queen herself stating; "An Aviation Bill will provide for effective and efficient management of the United Kingdom's airspace."

How this will manifest itself remains to be seen, as currently there is no big picture view by the Regulator and bizarrely, assessing the cumulative impact of other approved or submitted ACPs (such as those by LOA & BZN) on top of the recent Farnborough ACP, does not seem to be a prerequisite for the Regulator when making its decision.

Please therefore be prepared to support your Club Officers and the BGA when a 'call to arms' is issued to help oppose an ACP and I will leave you with this final thought:-

Under the current process for a permanent airspace change, it is the person or organisation that wants and will benefit from, the permanent change that is responsible for submitting the ACP. Included within this is the consultation phase which they instigate and then collate and summarise the outcome of, to the CAA with its final submission. So I guess Turkeys do get to vote for Christmas after all!

Secretary's Report

by Dave Bray

A look back over the past year in notes from the committee meetings:

The start of the year saw Jon Hunt, Peter Boulton and Lukasz Nazar leave the committee to be replaced by Paul Smith, Vukan Andjelkovic and John Dickson.

Following the adoption of a refined club structure and to help with workload management and communication, 6 of the 7 members took on an area of the club to be responsible for. Martin took Equipment, Alex Technical, Vukan Marketing, Dave Safety, Paul M Operations and Paul S IT. Paul Smith offered to lead modernising the club's website – planning both improvements to the online sales side and allowing it to be mobile device friendly. He'd already formed a subcommittee and was progressing the work.

Follow up actions to the Forum involved working financial numbers for a DG1001 as well as Euro/Sterling rates.

January saw the continued push for CASC status with Tim Marlow leading this on the committee's behalf. The CAA and OFCOM were fended off with new licences for the 8.33kHz radios as well as the Oxford Glider Base call sign licence amended accordingly. The membership Secretary presented her

current initiatives with seemingly endless energy and enthusiasm.

A marketing plan was presented, giving some thoughts on focus for the future. The plans for an Open day began to take form.

Approval was given to purchase two FLARM units, one for the DG505, the other for an Astir. Following the January meeting, news came to the club of a UK/BGA registered K21, coming up for sale. This was on the “rarely happens” options list of the fleet plans so a team of OGC reps headed off to Talgarth to check it out. “EGZ” was brought and the K13 “CCE” was made good to be sold.

In February, the second Astir trailer was given a budget to be refurbished, the work carried out by John Hanlon. However, the Astir itself was found to have a damaged frame so a new one of these was ordered and fitted – thanks to Gary and Pete among others

The treasurer proposed some rebranding of the OGC products as well as the reintroduction of the mini course and a new “learn to glide” package. The new website testing was well underway by mid Feb.

In March, the winch’s hydraulic leg was fixed, and it was decided that after nearly 3 years of not being needed Ka8 “CYZ” was to be sold – purchased by the University of West England (UWE). The club’s new website went live to much acclaim.

By June the club had heard that its CASC application had been successful and that the club had been gifted a sizable amount of money – the first donation to be eligible for HMRC Giftaid tax relief. It was decided that this should be spent on the winch to secure its future. Flying was also going well with 60% more gliding been reported.

The club was informed that the RAF parachute association was looking to reform, but after years of a joint operation between us, this was not going to be immediately possible. The CFI and Chairman were tasked to resolve this.



Getting ready to welcome our visitors at the open day

The end of June saw the club’s open day with a fantastic turn out to support visitors as well as great weather which helped us do 80 launches over the day. The funds raised were put towards FLARM units for the K8 and K13 which means five of the club’s aircraft have this traffic awareness and collision avoidance technology – please ask an instructor if you don’t know how to incorporate it into your flying.

The Club learnt that ex-member Ken Harris had passed away, Ken was a former Vice Chairman of the club in the late 50's and early 60's and flew Hurricanes before this. The club has been presented a painting of a K13 "Redfin" the former name of one of our K13s.

By August, it was clear that the summer's weather hadn't been as good as 2018, and plans were started for the end of season party in September – a Polish night hosted by Hubert and his team of helpers. The Hangar door bottom rails which had been found to have rusted away were fixed by a hard-working team and should be good for another 33 years. The club passed a safety audit by the RAF – thanks to everyone's continued efforts to keep safety your highest priority.

The Winch refurbishment project plan was presented to the committee by Richard Hall and suggested that with the initial investment provided by the donation the new Dyneema cable should in fact be cost neutral to the club while improving cable handling, giving fewer cable breaks and perhaps higher launches. The go ahead was given with work to be done in November. Planning for an externally hosted Christmas party was given the go ahead.



At the meeting in September, the OGC products being sold were discussed with mixed results, so expect a review of these over the winter. Meetings and communications with the RAF were discussed with the CFI having compiled extensive documentation to support resumption of joint operations. A review of the Airspace change proposal at RAF Brize Norton was also covered. Funding to replace older parachutes was given the go ahead for three new ones – these should be used in the two seaters please!

Plans for the AGM and the FORUM were discussed, with the committee having had another busy year, but ready to tackle 2020.

Stubbornness wins the day at Bicester Regionals

Competition Flying with Dave Bray

It was back in 2009 that I'd last been a regular (half decent?) competition pilot and after 9 years off I had an enjoyable return at the club class nationals in 2018. For 2019 though, I decided I'd fly a comp a little closer to home.

You can't get any closer to OGC than Bicester and I've had some brilliant flights there over the years, so I put an entry in to fly the sports class. Bicester is a two class comp which ensures that not only are you flying against similar performance gliders, but you fly tasks set to what is achievable by each class.

These days, I find that most of the preparation needed to fly in a comp is fairly straightforward, with "check the trailer before you leave", "fly the glider as much as possible before hand", "make sure you pack the batteries, parachute and map" then if possible "get to the campsite early to bag a good space" always sound advice. However, in addition to those obviously important tasks, I now pay particular attention to the morning routine each day of the comp. The aim is to get the glider rigged and readied for the day ahead before the organisers give the briefing – this allows you to relax with a cuppa, a bite to eat, and socialise with fellow pilots and crews. However, none of this would be possible without support from either other people or in my case, a dedicated crew, (cheers Dad).

"Fly as much as possible"

The weather this particular week of the summer wasn't living up to the previous epic year, not because it rained, but because it was too hot, with too stable an airmass. These conditions meant that the temperature required to trigger the formation of thermals was often above 30 degrees, great for sunstroke, not so good for gliding. It was the second day before we actually got off the ground with a task.

As soon as the "sniffer" glider confirmed the temperature had reached the trigger point and solid thermals were forming, we were good to launch, a relief for the pilots as it meant leaving the baking hot grid and finding the cooler air above. Launching a competition grid is one of those amazing sights, needing to be seen to be appreciated, 50 or so gliders being launched behind 7 or so tug aircraft, one after the other - in the hour it takes to do this, a gliding site rivals most international airports for the number of take offs and landings!

For me, one of the joys of competition flying is that there are other gliders in the same task area as you so this gives the chance to use or ignore their decisions depending how you feel the flight is going. For example, on a blue day, pilots can fly as a group to maximise the chance of finding the next thermal, whereas on a classic "puffy cu" day, you may wish to back yourself to choose a better path between the clouds than fly with someone else.

The start and first leg of the flight were one of those critical moments where I wanted to maximise the energy by waiting for the clouds to line up in such a way that I could follow the energy, circling as little as possible whilst drifting downwind. However, everyone else had the same idea, so after a great run between clouds it ended up with a mass of gliders rocking up at Grafham Water under a lone cloud whose thermal was getting weaker and weaker... time to leave the others and push on. There were two obvious answers, follow a line of clouds to the left or to the right of the way I wanted to go. While I can't remember the exact

reasons I chose left, I ended up getting to clouds and catching a thermal bubble when those joining underneath me failed to climb away. I watched this happen three times on my way up to the motorway services to the west of Northampton, however when over the centre of Northampton town, (under a huge dark cloud going up at over 10kts), it was obvious that the day was changing, fewer new clouds forming with only big mature clouds in the opposite direction to where I was headed home. Time to think a bit more carefully about what to do next.

“The day was changing”

A glide out to the turnpoint led to a lowish climb away and drifting away from Bicester, however, I’ve usually found thermals above Silverstone racetrack so having got enough height to get there I set off. Finding a few climbs on the way but nothing solid worth spending much time in, I saw a couple of the open class gliders but they were already on their way home so was left on my own again - got to make the most of all these little climbs and push on. Getting lower, I headed towards Turweston airfield and gave them a radio call with the thought of landing somewhere to be able to get an aero tow out of. They were friendly and helpful so I joined a large circuit pattern to fly downwind over some large dark solar panels. My luck was in, a thermal was forming! Being low down though it was small and weak, fighting to keep the balance of height gain while being drifted away from the airfield, the thermal came good and while climbing up I started thinking of the next steps. I’d already got away from low down once so it became a plan for survival - time to head for hot spots, towns, brown fields etc.. I started heading towards Brackley, not exactly the right way for the task - 90° off in fact, but a good bet to find a climb. The problem with that plan was that I didn’t have enough height to get there.

“Another landout field”

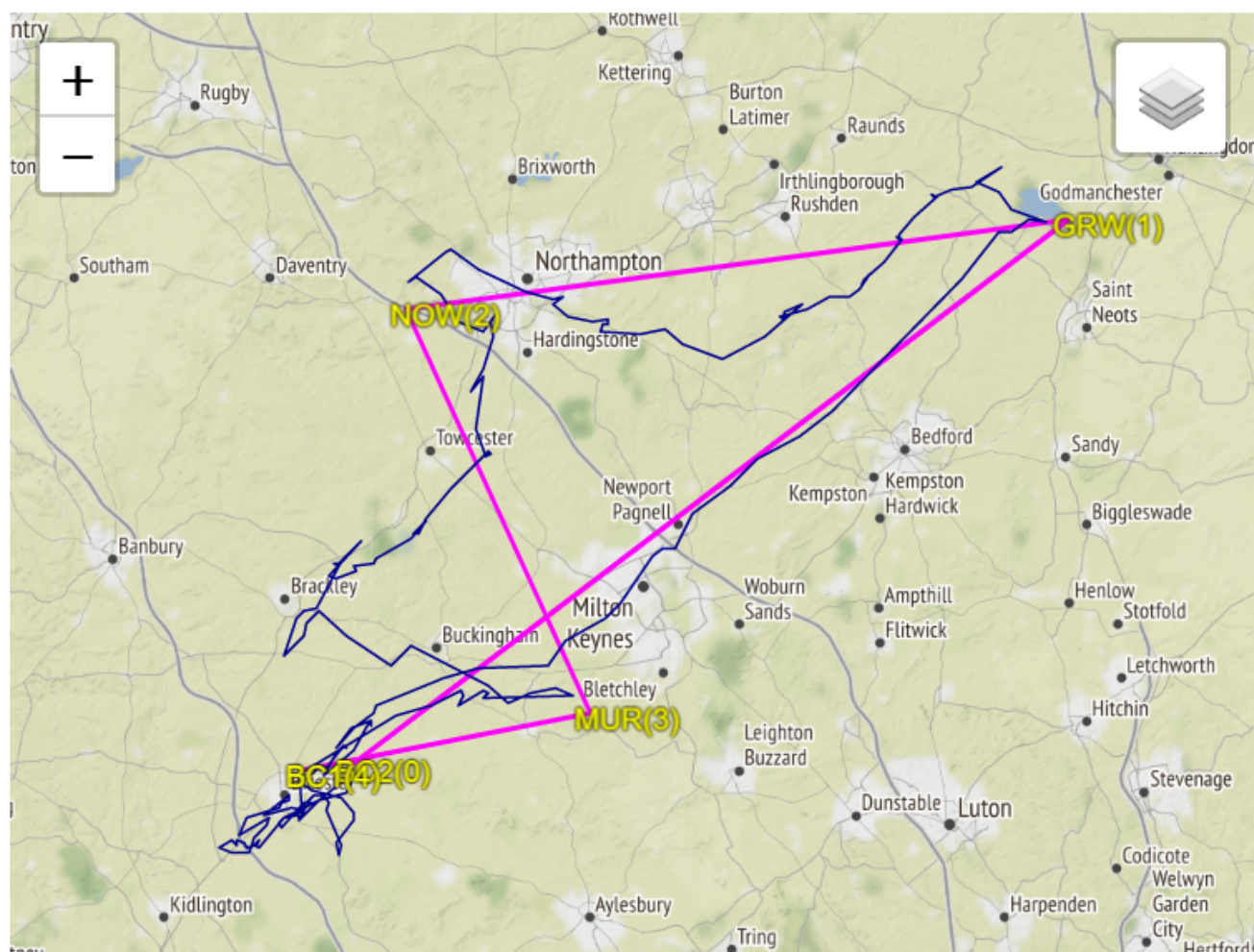
Having picked another landout field, I realised that the far side of it was a row of chicken or pig sheds, remarkably similar to the ones to the north of Weston - a fairly reliable hot spot. Setting up the circuit, over the top of these sheds I felt a bubble and eased the wing into it, I was rewarded with a peak of 6kts on the vario before I’d completed the first turn! At only 700ft above the ground I knew that if I lost this I’d be landing,

so it was time to focus and make those peaks turn into a solid climb. Centring such a strong narrow thermal is hard low down, the air which goes up has to come into the thermal and close to the ground it can’t come in from below, it comes in from the sides meaning all sorts of gusts affect your ASI and vario. It becomes crucial to be able to differentiate between horizontal and vertical gusts, flying by the seat of your pants and constantly adjusting the angle of bank to stay where you want. Unfortunately, this climb only lasted about 2200’ so by 2900’ I levelled the wings and set off. By now I was easily on glide back to Bicester but the sky was changing again with new clouds forming, time to change from survival mode back to cross country mode - I decided to give these clouds a try whilst both staying in range for the airfield and aiming at the final turn point. A climb up to 3700’ gave me a calculated 37km of distance with only 32km needed to be flown but I knew there was 17kt headwind to deal with – something the Libelle doesn’t like too much. I hadn’t come this far to give up though so aimed at the turn point and went for it. A glide at 55kts should maximise the height with those new clouds already dissipating.

Watching the figures change whilst gliding was paying off and by the time I turned Mursley I was 700’ over glide with 20km to go. 20km / 12miles isn’t all that far but from only 2700’ and toward the sun I couldn’t see the airfield, thus making the final glide judgement an exercise in trusting the instruments. With 10km to go however those instruments said I was comfortable, however, now the headwind started to bite. I was achieving less than the glide I required. 23:1 when I needed 24:1, shocking considering I usually get around 39:1. Watching the airfield move up the canopy isn’t a great feeling and with 5km to go the computer decided I wasn’t going to make it. Plenty of nicely cut fields ahead though which I’d checked out earlier in the day after launching so carry on and see if I could make back the glide. Pulling up on every bubble began

working again and the picture in front started to look better again. About 1km out I found sink... I increased speed to 65kts and down to 150ft knew that for the next two fields I had to make an early choice about landing out or committing to the airfield – indecision at this point is not an option. The energy and picture held though so I popped over the hedge and landed on the airfield to be met by my crew. Not exactly a textbook finish but safe and legal. It was round about here I was told that I was the only one who'd made it back with most of the trailers off out around Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire. A day win?

In the end I was the only one back with the flight of 201km being completed in 3hrs 40mins – a struggle for the last 3 hours of it. The guy who finished 2nd was in a field 10km from the finish line, only needing one more climb to have gotten home.



It was satisfying to have got round, especially from low down, twice, but it was pure stubbornness to refuse to give in and stop looking for climbs. The rest of the comp was a bit of a disaster, I was unable to fly the next task and on the third day I not only busted the start height but then failed to notice a change of air mass in the blue and landed out having not turned since the start line. Oops!

That said I still love competition flying and I look forward to a couple more regionals next year – perhaps I can persuade you to come and join me – we can use the clubs DG505.

Dave "HLK" 301 Libelle.

Happy Christmas 2019

Liisi Laks, Paula Hastings & Paul Smith



Glider Flight

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of rope
A few feet from "The Road".
I whip the Schweitzer 'round so fast
Exceeds the max'mum load.
I've slipped, I've stalled, I've spiral dived,
Spun past the sixth full turn.
"You can't do that!" the new ones say,
They've got a lot to learn.
I find a thermal, turn in it
To try and gain some height.
But I must beat the towplane down
Or this is my last flight!
On 2-3 fly a crooked base
Then crank the plane around.
Or 2-9: pass the hangars then I dive straight for the ground!
But the best is 3-6 final when I know I should be higher,
Put out my hand, and touched the passing telephone wire!

-Anon. With apologies to John Gillespie Magee Jr.

Gliding Muse

By A.Klinge

In summer when round about 10,
The sunshine starts its warming
We see a few small clumps of Cu
Around the airfield forming.

We study parts of weather charts
Excitedly exploring,
Surmising where some rising air
Will super charge our soaring.

We plan a flight way out of sight
But soon lose our elation-
The sun has passed, it's overcast,
With great precipitation.

*Taken from Sailplane & Gliding,
Volume 12, Number 1 February 1961.*