

British Gliding Association Annual Report 2015



Chairman's Report

I'm always slightly torn between reflecting back on the good, the bad and the ugly of the previous year, versus the optimism of what's to come in our next annual cycle.

Either way, the challenges remain, with regulatory, financial, environmental and societal changes forming the backdrop to the multitude of point issues the BGA volunteers, clubs and professional staff face in the day-to-day business of keeping us all flying.

It's clear, that with our recent ageing demographic (although that might be changing with increasing junior numbers) and ever-increasing workload, we need to work smarter, rather than longer. To this end, the sports and recreation associations (our sister organisations across the UK GA sector) are increasingly working together to tease out the strategic initiatives that might give more chance of success on the day-to-day stuff.

As an example, if several years ago we'd challenged the farcical Airspace Change Process (ACP) with the CAA and DfT, there's a strong argument that a substantially fairer outcome would have materialised on several awards of airspace that remain depressingly under-utilised to this day - Norwich, Doncaster and Southend to name just three. Get the operating environment right and the hardworking BGA volunteer teams have more chance of obtaining a fairer outcome. As ever, we've little argument when airspace users fill their allocated volume to ensure safe and efficient flight, but it is grossly unfair when airspace is grabbed as a capital asset, regardless of its utilisation. Our activity in this area remains a key ongoing focus and we'll continue to press logically, but stridently, for a more appropriate ACP that's fit for purpose, transparent and accountable.

With increasing pressure on housing, our airfields are under increasing target by developers. Whilst they are inherently green, open countryside spaces, airfields are often designated 'brownfield' by planners, and are therefore vulnerable to 'redevelopment' and loss. However, there are examples of airfields being incorporated into local area plans and being cherished as strategic assets by enlightened local councils. A thriving and financially balanced club is likely to be a more robust club for developers to challenge. These days, clubs have several potential routes to funding and there have

been some superb examples of capital purchases / development across the movement. Closer to home, I'm glad to report continuing creativity from the Philip Wills Memorial Fund - and I give thanks to the hard working trustees for their work over the last year.

Whilst on the subject of hard-working volunteers, our upcoming AGM will vote to elect the BGA Executive Committee as part of our normal democratic process. The Executive members are volunteers, but take on sometimes vast workloads in addition to the comparative sanity of their home lives. I'd like to say a huge 'thank you' to them, with particular mention of John Williams for his work in the airspace area - dedicated, uncompromising, a wise head and not too shabby a pilot either. Thanks, John.

Our work with DfT, CAA, and EASA continues. EASA is currently considering the 'Basic Regulation'. Suitable changes would allow our CAA to grant organisations like ourselves the legal structure to oversee most aspects of our regulatory area. Simply put, the BGA would be able to continue to oversee gliding in the UK. Arguably, it's been a huge waste of time and effort to retain the status quo established circa 80 years ago - but no-one claimed EASA approaches light aviation from a common-sense perspective. Arguably, if one wanted a perfect world, one wouldn't pursue gliding (cue sounds of more rainfall outside as I write). However, I'd rather be cutting the ever-growing airfield grass, than fighting the bizarre legal constructs from the Brussels bureaucrats. And that's my last mention of the EU debate....

And talking of rainfall, after the winter deluge of the El Niño sou-westers, we must be due a stonking summer in 2016, with endless, blistering hot days. The year certainly started well, with our Junior team bringing back the gongs from the Junior World Gliding Championships in Australia - an epic performance with team bronze, individual gold for Tom Arscott and bronze for Sam Roddie. They've also received well-deserved recognition from the UK air sport community by being awarded the Royal Aero Club's Prince of Wales Cup. Great job! With surging interest in junior gliding and increases in junior membership numbers we're seeing the fruits of several years' groundwork by a small team supporting and actively encouraging gliding for youngsters.

Whilst on the subject of seeing the fruits of previous effort, (ROI if you'd prefer), our website www.gliding.co.uk is selling more gliding vouchers than ever before. What's more, the previous non take-up of introductory flight vouchers has reduced. That means more people going gliding and using our virtual doormat to step over the gliding threshold.

Rather than mix more metaphors, I'll sign off at this juncture. Suffice to say, the BGA remains in rude health, with a vibrant community regularly contributing far more than they receive. It's a privilege to be part of gliding in the UK.

Safe landings.

Peter Harvey

Chairman, British Gliding Association

Chief Executive's Report

2015 ended on another high, with a stunning performance by the British Gliding Team at the Junior World Gliding Championship in Australia. A Gold medal for Tom Arscott, a Bronze for Sam Roddie and a Bronze for the combined team led by team manager, Andy Davis, once again demonstrated the depth and breadth of talent within UK gliding. The entire junior team are great role models for junior gliding and clearly demonstrate the opportunities in our sport given talent, hard work and support.

The various Nationals classes are changing shape along with the market; the new 21m gliders are redefining the Open Class and the increasing popularity of the 18m and Club classes is clear. Competitive gliding is a key focus point and motivator and it's great to see this important aspect of our sport evolving at all levels. The BGA ladder was busy again during 2015, with the highs and lows of over 1.2 million kms of task flying instantly analysed and compared, again resulting in ladder winners receiving trophies alongside other pilots who have flown further, faster and higher. A number of records were broken in 2015.

As reported by the sub-committee chairmen, our fantastic volunteers, staff and contractors have again been busy on all fronts. The joint work between various sub-committees during 2015 continues to evolve. Whether related to participation, or specific to safety management issues such as airspace safety education or field landing hazards, the wide scope of experience and expertise employed in support of gliding is greatly appreciated. Congratulations to those who have been recognised through BGA and RAeC awards.

Governance and financial control is an important aspect of our work. As you can read elsewhere in this annual report, cautious forecasting and ongoing cost control resulted in a healthier than budgeted surplus in 2015.

A number of anticipated regulatory developments emerged during the year, including:

- a proposed revision to the ANO as a natural follow-on from the Red Tape Challenge;
- the CAA proposal for a self-declaration private pilot medical requirement;

- an EU consultation on the high-level 'Basic Regulation' that defines European aviation regulation;
- a proposed, lighter set of requirements replacing the Approved Training Organisation rules; and
- proposed lighter rules associated with maintenance as well as operations.

We have yet to gain any benefit from EASA's potentially helpful comments about risk-based regulation and proportionality, but the signs are promising. EASA's position on pilot medicals for recreational flying remains a concern and we continue to work with European colleagues and the supportive UK CAA on this important issue. The UK Government's position on airfields and planning policy points towards decision-making by Local Enterprise Partnerships; the potential impact of these unelected and unaccountable partnerships is unclear.

Growing CAA involvement in the administration of gliding regulation is resulting in greater direct and indirect costs to participants. With the lower costs and expertise within our own organisation in mind, we are encouraging a change in EASA's qualified entity requirements with the aim of receiving delegated authority from the CAA. Our strategy document in support of gliding operations has been updated, resulting in a 2016-2019 revision designed to help us remain focussed on key issues, including improving support to volunteers such as instructors and inspectors.

The deluge of airspace change consultations hasn't abated during 2015. We consider each consultation in detail and respond appropriately. We are very grateful for the combined efforts of the BGA airspace team and our partners from other air sports who do a great job of helping to maintain our airspace freedoms in the face of powerful commercial interests. If we're feeling optimistic, the CAA's review of the airspace change process could result in a transparent, less combative and more efficient way forward. During 2016, we'll learn more about that as well as the future strategic development of UK airspace with the involvement of the FASVIG.

Participation sits firmly alongside airfields and airspace as being strategically important to our sport. The overall membership of the association has remained flat for a number of years. Other than a regulated minimum age for solo, there is no age barrier in gliding.

However, it doesn't take a great deal of insight to recognise that if the average age of our membership keeps climbing as it is currently forecast to, some gliding sites are likely to be a bit quiet in the decades to come.

Our hard-working exhibition volunteers are doing a great job of taking gliding to the public. Social media is helping to drive traffic to the BGA marketing website. Introductory flight numbers are increasing and every expression of interest or visitor is a marketing opportunity for a gliding club. And as delegates at the November BGA club management conference discussed, meeting the expectations of new members and addressing the changing needs of existing pilots isn't easy but are key priorities for many clubs and are resulting in some interesting positive developments.

A number of opportunities emerged during 2015. Whether we are helping to run a gliding club, planning for the next World Championships or simply looking forward to a year of great gliding, there is plenty to be optimistic about in 2016.

Pete Stratten

Chief Executive

pete@gliding.co.uk

I am pleased to report a surplus of income after tax for the year of £20,520 (2014 £70,999 which included a one-off distribution of £26,500 received on the winding up of NPLG Limited).

Income has generally held up against the historic trend and costs have been controlled leaving the resulting surplus well ahead of Budget.

Marketing expenditure is higher. We have had a presence at more shows including the Skills Show & the Outdoor Adventure & Travel Show in addition to our usual attendance at the Flying Show and AeroExpo.

The web site upgrade is substantially complete. The new site is more pleasant to use and has significantly boosted sales of trial lesson vouchers. Sales for the year to September 2015 of both Trial Lesson and Mini Course Vouchers are £99,870 compared with a total of £49,440 for the year to September 2014. However it would appear that more vouchers are being redeemed so it is premature to expect that there will be a proportionately large increase in the surplus on unredeemed vouchers in future years.

The BGA continues to spread cash deposits between a number of banks to minimise the continuing (and I sense increasing) risk from the global financial crisis. Interest receivable has decreased in line with interest rates.

The 2016/17 Budget assumes the continuance of the current low inflation and interest rates. Participation in gliding is assumed to remain broadly similar.

There is a proposed small increase in the club capitation membership fee recognising the modest inflationary pressure on costs. The Executive Committee propose to put further money into marketing. The increased budget for Airspace is in anticipation of the growing work to counter the multiplying threats of loss of airspace.

We need to nudge up ARC fees again this year to reflect the unavoidable increase in airworthiness support costs. We are opposing, but do not know at the time of writing whether the CAA element of the fee will increase.

Owing to personal commitments I have indicated to the Executive Committee that I would like to step down as BGA Treasurer after this AGM. I would like to record my appreciation of the support of BGA office staff particularly Pete Stratten and Peter Bishop. Their work not only facilitates the Treasurer's task but makes it a pleasure to perform. I will endeavour to achieve a smooth and timely hand-over to my replacement.

Leslie Kaye
BGA Treasurer

In this report 2 years ago I wondered if 2014 would see a turning point in the inexorable pressure for more and more controlled airspace (CAS). At that time, there were indeed some grounds for optimism such as the CAA's introduction of Radio Mandatory Zones (RMZs) as an alternative to Class D, and the Post Implementation Reviews (PIRs) being carried out on the patently disproportionate introduction of Class D airspace at Norwich and Doncaster.

Last year I reported on actions that had left the credibility of the CAA's airspace group at an all-time low and at the BGA conference I felt compelled to state that we had lost all faith in the CAA's ability to make proportionate rational decisions derived from evidence-based inputs.

So what can be said about the past twelve months?

The PIR at Doncaster is still awaited. That case, where grossly inflated volumes were claimed, seems to be tailor-made for changing to an RMZ. Instead we now have an airfield, Hawarden, which provides no public transportation, pushing hard for an RMZ and clearly dismissing the legitimate concerns of other users in its feedback report to CAA for what will likely be a precedent-setting decision.

Southend, where an RMZ was initially put in place, which was subsequently and unfathomably changed to Class D, saw its commercial traffic numbers reduce steadily over the most recent 10 months. Perhaps this will become the next Doncaster? Southend's PIR is also awaited.

The headlong rush for CAS at Farnborough, Inverness, Brize-Norton, Oxford (which seeks Class D despite having no current passenger traffic), Leeds Bradford and Belfast continues unabated.

Amid the gloom a serial optimist might yet see some glimmers of hope. They may seem tiny in proportion to what looms ahead of us, but rare glimmers of hope they are:

- After the inexplicable decision to create new CAS in an important soaring area where no Commercial Air Transport (CAT) flew and which lay outside the scope of its own consultation, the CAA reversed its decision and in July adjusted the base of the new airspace upward by some 14,000ft.
 - The CAA and the military worked hard to free up the heavily under-used low flying area R610a which opens up soaring access to some of the most beautiful and wildest terrain in the country.
 - In our discussions with NATS and the military about areas of transponder exemption above FL100 we have seen the CAA insist on rational, evidence-based assessment. This is particularly welcome; without it there would be little hope of proportionate outcomes.
 - The CAA elected to "pause" their Farnborough ACP assessment. The reasons have not been published, but anything which creates a better opportunity for a rational assessment of this flawed and disproportionate proposal deserves our support.
 - The Duxford launch of the CAA-backed Future Airspace Strategy for VFR users (FASVIG) marked a milestone in having our needs heard alongside those of CAT. I'm delighted that John Brady will attend the BGA Conference to tell us more of this potentially game-changing initiative.
- More than ever the events and CAA decision-making over the next 12 months will have a pivotal impact on our sport. We hope that compelling rational arguments can and will be heard above other commercial or controlling interests. I am again indebted to the main stalwarts of the airspace committee, Sarah Kelman, Andy Roch, Gordon MacDonald and Bruce Cooper and many others, as well as Pete Stratten and for magnificent efforts from John Brady and Tom Hardie of the LAA/FASVIG and BHPA respectively.

John Williams
Chairman, Airspace Committee

Competitions and Awards Committee

The Competitions and Awards Committee's scope is broad – we are responsible for promoting all forms of competition gliding, UK and international competition matters including ratings, competition bids, nationals entries and the British team. Key areas currently in our sights include coaching, creating better and more fun competitions, funding and communications. The committee meets around five times each year during the winter doing the groundwork - literally! - so that you can spend the summer in the air. The committee has seen some membership changes over the past year – Mark Holden has stood down as chair on becoming a father but remains on the committee, while Paul Candler, Pete Masson and Matt Cook have retired. Pete and Paul were two of the longest-serving committee members, and the sport of gliding owes them a huge 'thank you'.

2015 has been a success for the British Team. World Champion Tom Arscott won the Junior World Gliding Championship Club Class at Narromine in Australia, hotly pursued by Sam Roddie who took the Bronze; the Juniors also brought home the Bronze team medal. Andy Davis won Bronze in the Europeans' 18m class at Ocseny, Hungary while G Dale and Dave Bromley narrowly missed medals in the Club and Standard classes in Rieti, Italy. Overall 9 pilots achieved Top 10 positions in Internationals this year – a great result! We congratulate the team and thank British Team Manager Graham Garnett for his role in supporting the British Team operation.

We continue to wrestle with the issue of funding - particularly with the cost of sending the team to Australia for the Juniors and next year's World Championship flapped classes at Benalla. This is something for us to focus on as part of the 5-year plan, but there are no simple solutions - properly supporting the team takes time and funding, even with the significant volunteer input we have at present. The Juniors did a good job of getting sponsorship; this is something that can make a real difference. Back home, UK National competitions had a good year - everyone other than the Juniors had 5 or more competition days. Congratulations to national champions Ayala Truelove (Standard), Ed Johnston (15m), Pete Harvey (18m), Stefan Astley (Juniors), Will Ellis (Club), Kim Tipple (20m) and Andy Davis (Open).

In 2014 we surveyed competition pilots to find out what they felt was good about the competition set-up and what needed improvement. We published the conclusions in S&G for all to learn from, and in 2015 we ran a Directors' Seminar which highlighted the learning from the survey and took attendees through the Competition Organisers Guide which holds all the key information needed to run a competition. The committee's analysis of field landing accidents was presented at that session; while this is not just a competition issue, we are reviewing what rule and culture changes might reduce both the number and risk of field landings. These are elements of our Competition Improvement Plan which aims to make competitions more accessible and more fun – clearly remaining safe is part of this. This year we solicited bids for 2017 Nationals earlier than in previous years, with the intention to move to a 2-year notice so that clubs have more chance to plan and get sponsors.

The Distance Handicapped Task – where different TP barrel sizes compensate for different handicaps - was used successfully in several regional competitions and has proved popular with pilots, so we are considering how this might be developed, while reviewing the Competition Rulebook to look for other opportunities to reduce land-outs and increase racing fun.

Outside rated competitions, we are pleased to see both a vibrant National Ladder and a rejuvenation of the Inter-Club League. Congratulations to John Williams of Trent Valley, firmly on the top rung of the National Ladder - the Ladder scores this year were exceptional and reflect the excellence of UK cross-country flying outside competitions as well as within. In the Inter-Club League, hosts Husbands Bosworth won a closely fought final against regional league winners Nympsfield, The Park and Wormingford.

Our vision is to increase cross-country flying by providing a fun, safe and challenging environment which encourages people to take part in, and improve their skills to move up through, the different levels of competition. See you in the start sector!

Liz Sparrow

Chair, Competitions & Awards Committee

Development Committee

In 2015, once again the Development Committee's workload was dominated by the changes to the Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) regulations. We continued to represent gliding on the HMRC CASC forum to consult on the rules and had some useful influence as a result. The new CASC rules were written for all sports and as such are not ideal from a gliding perspective. However, after running five CASC workshops, a number of club visits, numerous calls and publishing gliding-specific guidance we believe most clubs can find a way to remain a CASC. Sadly, a small number have decided to withdraw, at least for the time being, which will impact their annual costs.

The Committee continues to provide clubs with support dealing with planning applications that might threaten their operations. In the year to September there were two significant planning issues where wind farms threatened the operations of clubs. I am pleased to report that the response to the planning applications was measured but robust and in all cases there was an acceptable outcome. Our sport owes a great deal to the volunteers, at club and BGA level, who quietly but diligently carry out this work. Generally, the number of wind turbine applications seems to be in the decline, not doubt driven by reductions in the feed-in tariff. We are now active with a number of other planning issues relating to buildings adjacent to club sites.

We continued to support clubs applying for grant funding with the Development Committee active in eleven applications, many of which were via the Inspired Facilities scheme. We hope some of these initiatives will enhance the clubs' facilities, increasing their appeal to visitors both new and old. As well as grant funding we also provided advice to eight clubs on site security and rating issues. Other topics covered have been the new auto-enrolment pensions affecting any club with employees and the issue of new model articles of association for clubs to use as a basis for their constitution.

The Development Committee also coordinated the response to a number of consultations that affected outdoor sports across the UK nations, including the UK Government Strategy for Sport, Improving Access to the Countryside, a UK review of CAP764 on wind turbines, and UK Sports' strategic policy review. We also played a role in continuing to support the opposition to making airfields "brown field sites" that may more easily be developed for housing. We need to remain vigilant on this topic with certain general aviation airfields already under attack from developers. Compiling and coordinating responses is often quite complex with broad options and conflicting needs from stakeholder to stakeholder. We also continue to provide representation and influence at the General Aviation Awareness Council. I would like to thank those involved for their painstaking application to this work.

In November we organised the Club Management Conference. This year the conference included separate streams for Club Technical Officers as well as the usual sessions for Chairmen, Treasurers and CFIs. This event is growing in attendance and provides attendees with a great opportunity to find out latest news, learn of new developments, successful practices, safety issues and, perhaps most importantly, exchange ideas.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers, in clubs and the BGA, that our sport relies on for their hard work.

Dave Latimer
Chairman, Development Committee

The Flight Operations Committee tends to work behind the scenes on a variety of tasks either in support of other committees or on individual projects at the request of the BGA.

Through us, the BGA is represented on the Airspace Incursion Working Group, a CAA led group tasked with reducing the number of airspace infringements. It is a fact that the number of airspace incursions is not reducing and the potential for serious repercussions in the event of a major incident is very real. The vast majority of these incidents come from within the GA community but it is accepted that gliders are not a major factor. The CAA recognises that through the BGA system we are able to communicate directly to clubs and their members - something other areas of the GA community are not able to achieve. NATS and the CAA have established Local Airspace Incursion Teams; a number of BGA clubs are involved with these and if more groups are established the BGA will encourage clubs to engage with them.

The Airspace Information Management Working Group deals primarily with NOTAMs and Air Charts. The "customers" for this information are the whole of the aviation community so getting the balance right for everybody is always going to be a challenge. 2016 should see a reduction in NOTAMs referring to overseas airspace. Many pilots will use alternate sources of airspace notifications but it should be remembered that the CAA information is the official source and the CAA does not monitor the quality and accuracy of other providers.

Our presence on the Airprox Board continues with Chris Fox and Ed Downham representing our interests. Other members represent us within the GA alliance, ensuring that our voice is heard along with other airport organisations as we come up against a variety of challenges - both national and international.

The BGA continues to demonstrate that we can manage much of our own affairs with the support of knowledgeable volunteers and that direct input from the state or EASA is not always necessary.

Peter Moorehead

Chairman, Flight Operations Committee

1. Instructing

Course Development

Mike Fox and his team of BGA Instructor Coaches have continued to provide instructor courses on a regional basis. These courses could not run, of course, without the club Flight Instructor Coaches (FICs) taking on the task of running the "B" module part of the overall course program.

FIC Training

Mike Fox and Colin Sword developed a training day for our club Flight Instructor Coaches during the latter part of 2014. A series of these training days was run during 2015 and should now be available regionally on an as-required basis.

FI Revalidation Seminar

Instructors who now hold an EASA Part FCL licence can, as part of their three year re-validation requirement, attend a seminar. To meet this need, Mike Fox has developed a two day seminar which will be rolled-out during 2016. The first of these seminars will be held at Leicester at the end of January followed by a second one in early April.

Training Manual & Revised Pilot Training Syllabus Roll-Out

Two parallel issues influenced development of BGA training during the year. Most important was work to continue improving the BGA's own systems. Happily, and unusually for EASA, this coincided in many areas with the second: meeting regulatory requirements.

Resulting from this work, a new manual for training up to the Bronze Badge has been drafted and is being trialled at Bannerdown GC. It gives guidance to instructors and should, when the time comes, be compliant with EASA regulations.

2. Regional Teams

Setting aside what could easily be a continuing distraction - the conversion to life under EASA - the regional examining teams continue to support CFIs and their clubs.

3. Examining

During 2015, the three lead SE(S) have provided training and worked on behalf of the CAA to assess a small number of volunteers with a view to recommend their appointment as SE(S) or FIE(S). As EASA Part FCL continues to be delayed, this process has very much been slowed down. Andy Miller has developed the required seminar for our examiners, some of whom will shortly need to have their EASA authorisations revalidated.

4. ATO Approval

To support our members who now hold EASA FCL licences, the BGA applied for CAA approval as an Approved Training Organisation (ATO), initially only for conducting examiner and instructor revalidation seminars. We were granted ATO approval in early December 2015.

In closing, I would like to thank all the members of the Instructors' Committee, the many regional team members and all the club Flight Instructor Coaches for their continuing support.

Don Irving

Chairman, Instructors' Committee

In my last report, I described 2014 as “positive”. However, to be ending 2015 with a British Junior World Champion represents only the tip of an even more successful year for UK Junior Gliding.

I must start with congratulating our most successful British Junior Gliding Team for a decade. Tom Arscott and Sam Roddie took 1st and 3rd respectively in the Club Class, with amazingly consistent performances in difficult blue conditions. They were complimented by great results in the Standard Class from Matt Davis and Mike Gatfield. The whole team (including crews and coaches) showed that the British Junior scene is becoming a benchmark to others.

Back home, we have seen the first full entry list for the Junior Championships in many years, alongside unprecedented interest for the Winter Series. Junior membership is steadily increasing, with many new solos (particularly in the 14-16 years old bracket).

Having been through the rotor, we are now soaring a wave – but it’s a constant push to stay ahead and continue the climb. We need to continue developing new and innovative ways to keep moving forward and encourage more Juniors to join the sport.

My colleagues on the Junior Gliding Development Team have provided summaries of the progress made this year:

Winter Series (Steve Pozerskis)

2015 has seen the Winter Series grow significantly and, with 60-80 people entering each weekend it is becoming the most popular gliding event of the year! The idea of the Winter Series is twofold:

- Introduce young pilots to ridge / wave sites and use the winter months to brush up on their skills in challenging conditions.
- Keep Juniors interested. We have previously lost Juniors during the long winter months, but this keeps enthusiasm and skills fresh alongside building a close-knit group of mates.

In 2015 we visited Denbigh, Shenington and Sutton Bank, all of which produced some great soaring opportunities, but perhaps most notably at Sutton Bank when 6 of the Juniors took long “one-way” aerotows to the Northern Ridges. After 3 hours of ridge flying, 5 of them eventually landed safely in fields whilst one managed to scrape home. Some fantastic, safe and enterprising flying by those Juniors made for a memorable day. Meanwhile on both days the

wave had set up over the site and gave some extended flying for the 2-seaters.

By the time of the BGA Conference we will have visited the Mynd, which promises to be a good weekend. Our final round is at Nympsfield in April, so hopefully a chance for good cross-country. We want to thank the clubs and 2-seat owners who lend their gliders. The generosity of various syndicates and clubs cannot be overestimated and we are really grateful for your help. Please visit our facebook page if you would like to get involved.

Junior World Gliding Championships (Matt Davis)

In December 2015 the British Junior Team went to take on the best young pilots in the world at Narromine, Australia. After a slight mishap involving losing our container somewhere after the Suez Canal, our kit arrived in Sydney just in time for us to get some flying in during the practice week.

The weather and standard of flying we experienced was absolutely spectacular. In the Standard Class we broke Australian speed records, and the Club Class were exceeding 130kph actual. From stubble fires to cruising along convergences at 12000ft, this was a competition that had it all.

Coming into the finale of the competition our Standard Class pilots had unfortunately dropped down the rankings due to some technical issues. Our Club Class, however, had been flying exceptionally well and found themselves lurking around the medal positions heading into the final day.

As people around the world watched via online tracking, the Club Class pulled off an audacious tactical flight on the last day and beat the Germans round by a massive margin. This pushed them up into 1st and 3rd overall – we were World Champions! Our performance had also put us into 3rd place overall in the Team Cup, so we came away with three medals.

None of this would have been possible without all those who supported us throughout the year, including our fantastic sponsors: Land Rover, British Airways, Sydney Charles, Apogee Industries, Lasham Gliding Society, Naviter, NavBoys, and the British Gliding Association. Thank you to all those involved!

Junior Nationals (Saz Reed)

The 2015 Junior Nationals took place at Aston Down with 47 entrants, a massive change from the 14 who entered in 2011! Unfortunately the weather was variable, although it produced 3 competition days. The social side of the Juniors kept the spirits high with a number of activities, alongside XC tuition and the highly valuable debriefings. Support from gliding clubs and individuals to assist the coaching and lending gliders to be used for the week was very positive. We congratulate Stefan Astley, who flew his Nimbus 2 extremely well to take the title. Planning for the 2016 Junior Nationals at Tibenham is underway – a huge airfield with very few air-space restrictions promises to be a great host club for the comp.

Schools & Colleges (Yvonne Elliot)

For a second year the BGA has been active at the Skills Show where thousands of young people from schools and colleges attend to discuss possible career options with experts in their field.

Gliding has been identified by many as a gateway sport into the aviation industry and students and staff were excited about the career prospects and enjoyed their experience on the simulator. Some went home to ask their parents about joining their local gliding club, although there is more work we can do in this area.

Some clubs have asked how they can engage more actively with local schools and colleges and I have provided advice, support and a pack to support clubs while sharing good practice. PNGC has gained commercial status with Hampshire LA so they are supported by the county in offering gliding to local schools and colleges and there is a partnership with the local FE College. I would like to roll this concept out across the UK but first needs input from others.

We have an ongoing project with British Airways, who have identified gliding as an effective pipeline for young people to progress from school to become BA pilots. Funding and project aims still have to be agreed but watch this space this for what could be a very exciting initiative that will involve gliding clubs and year 9 pupils.

The BGA and its volunteers were invited to the House of Lords where glider pilots and commercial pilots spoke eloquently to MPs to promote the worth of gliding. Particular reference was paid to the STEM agenda and to careers in aviation for females.

There are many opportunities to promote gliding to schools and colleges and it remains my focus to push this across the country.

Mentor Scheme (Peter Hibbard)

We have put a lot of effort into pushing this side of UKJG over the past year, culminating in a new Mentor Guide Book which will shortly be sent to clubs. We hope this will encourage clubs to provide their own mentors as well as align our efforts nationally. In 2016 we intend to organise regional events as well as providing increased support to clubs. The success of this scheme relies largely on clubs embracing it and ensuring their Junior members are aware of how to get involved in the wider gliding movement.

Summary and 2016 Outlook

While continued financial support is clearly beneficial, our message to clubs this year is “image”. We are blessed with a visually spectacular, adrenaline-filled sport comparable to many of the most popular niche sports. It is fair to say that our sport doesn’t always portray these qualities. A trial lesson only shows a snippet of gliding, so we must rely on giving people the belief it can become something epic. We believe many potential members are lost because we don’t show them how exciting it can be. UKJG urges every club to evaluate how they advertise the sport – and we would like to help where possible. If you feel your website or clubhouse is dated, or would like ideas on where to target advertisements, please get in touch with us.

At the BGA Club Management Conference, I said that Juniors need a different approach to other trainees. We want to place a greater emphasis on clubs being a more involved, driving force, supporting and pushing Juniors to develop. As a youngster amongst adults, gliding clubs can be intimidating places, with shyness often mistaken for a lack of initiative or enthusiasm. Please ensure all your Junior members are aware of UKJG and the Regional Mentor scheme, which is a great way for them to integrate into the wider social scene of Junior gliding. When a Junior starts to make friends within the sport, the chances of them staying increases dramatically.

I want to pass my sincere thanks to everybody who has given time, money and energy over the years to help push Junior Gliding to the forefront, as well as the current Juniors who make it such a great place to be. We are beginning to see the rewards of our endeavours, but so much more can be achieved. Please remain open to new ideas and be willing to promote and support Junior gliding as actively as possible. We are always available to support or consult with, so don’t hesitate to contact us at ukjuniorgliding@gmail.com.

Charlie Jordan

Junior Gliding Development Team

Medical Advisers' Report

Our last report contained proposals for a return to earlier policies by which solo pilots could fly while simply meeting the standards for a private driver. These were accepted by the Executive without change, approved at the BGA Annual General Meeting in March and implemented immediately. An article published in the April/May issue of *Sailplane & Gliding* explaining the background to these changes.

During the first season since implementation no major unforeseen problems have arisen. Sadly the progress of the CAA medical working group has been less speedy. The BGA participated in the original group meetings during 2014, responded at length to the consultation document CAP 1284 in June 2015 and then again in August when further, less than satisfactory changes were proposed by the CAA.

Sadly, in June 2015, a pilot committed suicide in a glider. His depression was known to his General Practitioner and he was under treatment, but the club was not made aware of his illness. The disaster to German Wings flight 9525 in March caused by the suicidal act of the First Officer has caused considerable aeromedical activity. Proposals that all pilots become subject to regular psychological testing or that doctors are obliged to report mental illness to the authorities have had to be resisted. The BGA policy on mental illness is to restrict the member to a single named club where responsible officials have been informed, in confidence, of the problem. Our records were reviewed and a paper was presented to CIMP, the FAI medical commission, at their annual meeting in September. While not all cases have a successful outcome, one member who had recovered from a depressive illness informed his club that without their support he would have killed himself.

National and international representation remains important; Peter Saundby remains the Royal Aero Club delegate to CIMP whose meeting this year was held in Oxford prior to the International Congress of Aviation & Space Medicine. That meant that we had to organise the meeting (at which Pete Stratten presented). Steve Gibson represented the BGA at the CAA Medical Forum and the Royal Aero Club with Europe Air Sports.

During the year there were 48 file items logged, a further reduction on previous years. This was partly due to some pilots adopting EASA licences; other pilots who become less fit are now able to revert to a restricted medical status for which a driving licence is sufficient. The largest source (23) of queries was from pilots, prospective pilots or their parents. Largely arising from the change of regulation, the second source was the BGA office (9) with clubs being third (6). Only one query came from a General Practitioner. The remainder were from the CAA, the AAIB, FAI, and other Associations. Only one query came from a general practitioner.

Of the items logged, many concerned general policy with the remainder being about personal medical issues. Of less fit pilots, the recommended disposal was restricted in 19 cases, temporary grounding in 2 cases; only one pilot was permanently grounded.

Drs Peter Saundby, Steve Gibson & Frank Voeten
BGA Medical Advisers

Throughout 2015, the BGA Safety Committee has continued to support clubs' and pilots' efforts to reduce the fatal accident rate, to not harm any third parties, and to avoid any airspace infringements. Fatal accidents are lower than at any other time in the past 40 years during which records have been maintained. Although there were no fatal accidents during 2015, there were a number of accidents that given slightly different circumstances could have resulted in tragedy. Whatever you fly or your level of experience, there will be guidance relevant to you at www.gliding.co.uk/safety - please take a look.

Throughout 2015, the BGA Safety Committee worked to a set of agreed priorities. Over and above the routine of keeping the SMS operating (and thanks to the efforts of all those involved), a substantial amount of project work has been progressed including:

The Safety Committee worked successfully with colleagues from other sub-committees to develop mutual awareness by glider pilots and other airspace users. We plan to continue this vital work during 2016. In doing so, we also hope to develop a more joined-up approach with our military colleagues. Safety Committee members represent gliding on the CAA's Mid-Air Conflict Challenge Panel and the Conspicuity Working Group.

The BGA's volunteer accident investigation team has been trebled in size during 2015. A number of accidents that would otherwise have had important but understandably limited club-level investigation, have been subject to very helpful external scrutiny. As a result, our safety system is much better informed. As ever, the aim of this work is to prevent other accidents and incidents and not to apportion blame or liability. BGA accident investigation is subject to a published protocol.

Safety officers are an important asset to their clubs. During 2015, the support provided to club safety officers was reviewed and updated, including an online 'toolkit' provided via the BGA website.

Recently developed safety publications include advice on thermal soaring protocol, safe winch launching, preparation for flight, and aerotow performance. In response to consultation responses, BGA safety publications now have a definitive brand and format. These publications are carefully developed with expert input, formatted to help busy people absorb the messages, and then published on the website. Clubs and pilots are notified by emails, newsletters, etc, and where appropriate, hard copies are circulated; an example is the latest safe winch launching poster, which should have appeared on your club notice-board.

Having reviewed progress against the 2015 priorities, the Safety Committee is developing its updated priorities for 2016 and the detail will be published in due course. In closing, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Safety Committee, colleagues in other sub-committees, club chairmen and their committees, club safety officers, CFIs, instructors, club pilots, BGA staff and all others who contribute towards safe gliding.

Pete Stratten
Chairman, Safety Committee

BGA Support Activity

Our relationship with the CAA continues to enable a mutual understanding to the extent that their representatives often attend BGA Technical Committee meetings as observers. The BGA feels it holds a position of respect with the national regulator whereby those roles which remain in national hands are managed with in an appropriate and cooperative manner. Our regional RTOs continue to provide valued technical advice at the membership level over wide aspects of the technical side of gliding. The BGA continues to be assisted by Keith Morgan in meeting our CAMO quality targets.

Our Chief Technical Officer, Gordon MacDonald, has taken up education and refresher training and communication as an increasing role for the technical community. Our Pilot/Owner Maintenance and Refresher in Annual Renewal Processes courses have been particularly well received. We are keen to mount an additional practical course on woodworking skills as there is a risk of these skills being lost with the preponderance of GRP sailplanes. This issue has been further highlighted by our experiences in maintaining the significant number of wooden club and training aircraft in our fleet.

The BGA has retained close contact with the Royal Aeronautical Society's negotiations with the CAA concerning so-called 'E-Conditions' airworthiness, which enables flight experimentation for proof of concept evaluations with minimum regulatory intervention. This approach was ratified in October, but regrettably only applies to nationally registered aircraft. Through the BGA Technical Committee, gliders remain autonomous in this respect, but the BGA expects in the future to align our own processes with the new CAA approach.

The CAA has recently de-regulated self-launching micro-lights below 300kg AUW. With the assistance of the EGU, we are mounting a campaign to move future, light weight sailplanes into such a nationally regulated category. This decision remains in the gift of EASA through the Basic Regulation and Annex II definitions, so discussions remain slow moving.

EASA - European Regulation

2015 saw some significant and encouraging new developments to simplify European airworthiness regulation as applied to General / Sport aviation. In June, we saw the entry into law of CS-STAN, enabling a wide range of sporting and soaring equipment to be installed in sailplanes with a reasonable paperwork trail which can be generated locally. It will greatly ease future installation of loggers, navigation displays, radios and transponders, as well as facilitating a range of minor repairs.

Also in June (what a month for regulation in airworthiness and maintenance!) simplifying revisions to Part M were adopted, defining a simple and effective 'Minimum Inspection Programme' for sailplanes. These rules will be followed during the next two years by a new Part M 'Light' regulation offering further alleviations to both processes and licensed organisations such as the BGA. It is a sad fact that, when negotiating broader freedoms, there is still a necessary and continuing disruption to procedures.

Information is finally emerging from EASA that the EC Opinion on personal engineer licensing will be enacted in early 2016. The process and timescale will be set during the ratification. For the present we might assume a two year implementation process over 2017 to 2019. Regrettably this aspect of regulation still seems to follow to an old political model of regulatory procedures. It will impose an additional burden on the BGA, but we anticipate that currently approved BGA inspectors will be empowered under the new code. We remain deeply concerned that the requirements for qualification of new engineers will lead to a shortage of new candidates.

Howard A Torode
Chairman, Technical Committee

British Gliding Association Limited
8 Merus Court
Meridian Business Park
Leicester
LE19 1RJ

t: 0116 289 2956
e: office@gliding.co.uk
w: www.gliding.co.uk

© BGA 2015



**BRITISH
GLIDING
ASSOCIATION**