



# British Junior Gliding Team

*April-May 2017 update*



# Welcome

Hello and welcome to the first of a series of newsletters following the progress of the British Junior Team as they prepare to compete at the 10<sup>th</sup> FAI Junior World Gliding Championships later this summer. The 'Junior Worlds' take place every other year and see the best under-26 pilots from across the globe battling it out to become either club or standard class junior world champion. The two week competition has pilots racing around a set cross-country task each day, with distances of up to 500 km and average speeds well in excess of 100 km/h. The pilot who completes the task quickest gets the most points for the day, and the pilot with the most points at the end of the competition is crowned champion.

## Meet the 2017 British Junior Gliding Team

### Club Class Pilots



#### **Tom Arscott - Std Cirrus 'GW'**

Tom started gliding at the Surrey Hills Gliding Club, aged 12. He is the current Junior World Club Class Champion, having won the last Junior Worlds in Australia, 2015 and is looking forward to the opportunity to defend his title in Lithuania this year.



#### **Jake Brattle – DG101G 'EKP'**

Jake started gliding at the age of 13 at Kent Gliding Club and has been a dedicated member of the sport since. This is Jake's first year as part of the British Team and he cannot wait for the competition season to start!

### Standard Class Pilots



#### **Mike Gatfield - LS8 'L9'**

Mike started gliding as a 14 year old cadet at Booker Gliding Club. Mike represented the British Junior Team in Australia in 2015 and he will be flying in the Standard class once again this year. Mike has taken the entire Summer off work to focus on his flying and is making the most of the season attending gliding expeditions and competitions all over Europe.



#### **Finn Sleigh – ASW28 'S1'**

Finn was brought up in a gliding family and has probably spent at least half his life on an airfield. This is also Finn's first time representing the British Team and he has been kindly lent a very competitive standard class glider for the World Championships this year.

## Team Captain



### Shaun Lapworth

Shaun has been gliding for 15 years, has all three diamonds and is a keen club and Nationals pilot. With a background in IT and now the owner of a successful technical gliding business, he will be a great resource and asset for the team.

## Pre-Season Preparation

As soon as the team was announced in October 2016, the pilots arranged several meetings over the Winter to kick start the preparations. High priority items included arranging crews, a team captain, training weeks, practice competitions, funding and logistics for the season leading up to the Junior World Championships at the end of July.

In order to maximise their practice flying as a team, the team arranged for both pairs; Standard class and Club class to undergo three weeks of training and coaching along with two weeks of competition flying each before the JWGC. On top of this, the team have planned weekend and evening visits to multiple gliding clubs to train where possible and also assist in fundraising for the Worlds.

With a busy calendar in place for the season, the pilots now had to prepare their gliders! This started in mid-January when the re-weighing of all the gliders was carried out. Thanks must go to the Lasham Workshop for kindly lending the team their weighing equipment.

In the run up to the season, annual inspections were carried out on all the gliders, instruments and radios upgraded and performance enhancements were made including control surface sealing, C of G optimisation and bug wiper installations just in time for the first training weekend at Easter.



## Easter Training Weekend

The Easter Bank Holiday weekend saw Tom, Jake and Finn join members of the British Senior and Women's teams at Lasham Gliding Society for four days of training and coaching. Mike was unable to join as he was away on an expedition to Cerdanya, experiencing the amazing flying conditions that the Spanish Pyrenees have to offer.

Back in Blighty, it was raining, so Friday morning was spent discussing various aspects of competition flying with input from former World Champion Pete Masson and British Team coach Rich Hood. The afternoon brought a short flying window which Jake and Tom used to test out the various modifications they had made to their gliders and instrumentation over the past few months.

Saturday brought exceedingly good weather for a British Bank Holiday weekend, and a 2 hour assigned area task was set, routing up past Oxford and Swindon. The junior team flew the task together, racing against at least 10 other pilots from current or previous senior and women's teams. It wasn't all straightforward, and Tom and Jake had a close call, having to climb away from low level whilst approaching the last turnpoint. That evening was a great opportunity to debrief the flight in the company of some very experienced pilots and identify the areas we needed to improve upon.



Sunday was probably the highlight of the weekend. The forecast for the day gave the opportunity for another 2 hour assigned area task, but this time running along the south coast and over the south downs. Jake and Finn flew with coaches Matt Cook and Dave Watt respectively in two seaters, whilst Tom raced them in his own glider. The prevailing wind formed a 'sea breeze front', allowing the pilots to follow lines of energy and cloud nearly 100 km along the south coast and back again, with spectacular views of the South Downs National Park and coastline.

Monday's weather only gave a short flying window late in the afternoon. So the morning was spent discussing training plans for the rest of the season and other general admin. Jake and Tom did manage a short flight together in the afternoon, which allowed them to further practice some of the communication aspects that had been developed during the weekend. Overall it was a really useful few days and a great way to kick start to the gliding season.

## Gransden Lodge Training Weekend

On the weekend of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> May, the team were kindly invited to visit and fly at the Cambridge Gliding Club, Gransden Lodge. The pilots drove up late Friday night after work, with trailers in tow – in the hope of a weekend of cross-country flying together.

As it turned out, East Anglia proved to have the best weather in the country that weekend. Saturday started off overcast but cleared in the afternoon to provide reasonable cumulus under some high cover with a good cloudbase of up to 4000ft. The pilots all took a winch launch and were able to race to Leighton Buzzard and back at speeds of 93-98kph, making use of some nice lines of energy.

On Sunday, the forecasts were suggesting an excellent day across much of England but with the risk of isolated showers. Local boy



Finn set a 500km racing task for Mike and himself and a 420km task for Tom and Jake in their lower performance club class gliders. They all launched and set off on task by 11.30am. The forecast was spot on, with some very good conditions over the course of the day but with the added challenge of avoiding heavy rain showers. All the pilots survived a large rain shower near Silverstone and made it to the turnpoints over the Cotswolds. There were a couple



more showers to dodge later on task, but everyone made it back to Gransden by 5pm with plenty of the day to spare. Tom and Jake flew the 420km task at 82kph and 77kph respectively. Finn flew his 500km task at 88kph and Mike stormed the day at a blistering 97kph! With the flights entered on the ladder (a national online competition), Mike and Finn locked out the top two places for the day.

The team would like to say a huge thank you to the Cambridge Gliding Centre for the invite, for providing the team with subsidised launches and free accommodation and membership. The club has also been working hard to promote the team's crowdfunding page to their members. Many thanks to all the generous members who have very kindly donated.

## Andy Davis' cross-country coaching week

During the last week of April, Jake and Finn spent a week at Nympsfield on a Cross Country Course run by double World Champion Andy Davis. They were fortunate to have had some excellent weather, flying six out of the eight days available.

The weather allowed all of the course participants to experience some of the unique flying Nympsfield has to offer; allowing the pilots to fly the ridges that form the Cotswolds on some days and cross over the River Severn to the Brecon Beacons to fly over the Black Mountains on other days. Jake and Finn chose to resist the temptation of soaring the mountains to try and focus on cross country racing and tap into the wealth of racing knowledge and experience Andy has to offer.

Both Jake and Finn had a long coaching flight with Andy in a two seater, Finn flew with Andy on the Thursday around a 122km racing task and thanks to the much better than expected weather, they were able to complete it twice. Jake meanwhile also completed the task twice, practicing in his own glider.

The next day was Jake's turn with Andy in the two seater and Finn's turn in the single seater. Despite the 30knot winds, the weather was incredible and produced one of the most memorable flights for both pilots. A 2.5 hour Assigned Area Task



was set (AAT – a type of task with a bit more freedom for the pilots to choose where they fly). Finn and Jake achieved 107kph and 103kph respectively over a distance of 290km.

On the final weekend, Tom and Mike came to Nympsfield to fly on the Sunday with Finn and Jake. The weather was difficult early on with low and tricky cumulus conditions slowly improving to very good blue conditions later on. This allowed the team to practice flying and communicating in their pairs and allowed plenty of practice of changing gears (flying more aggressively when conditions are good, and more conservatively when conditions are poor).

## 51<sup>st</sup> Hahnweide Competition

Mike and Finn travelled to Germany in May for the 51<sup>st</sup> Hahnweide Gliding Competition. Despite being advertised as a friendly competition aimed at younger pilots, the entry list for most classes contained more past and current world champions than most nationals and the competition is regarded as one of the most competitive on the calendar. Other British team members competing included the Jones brothers, Matt Cook, Tim Scott and current open class world champion, Russell Cheetham. The aim of the week for both was to start practicing team flying.

The first day showed that a bit of local knowledge goes a long way in Hahnweide as the mountains to the south, the Alb, has a significant impact on the weather. The convergences that often set up establish themselves along the line of the ridge and sometimes require searching for to fly fastest. Finn and Mike made better use of this on the second day during a 400km task, however the conditions were still tricky with tight and broken thermals. Results were slowly climbing towards a 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> result during a tricky 300km flight in the blue aided by good team flying together.



Despite a landout 10km short on the last day, the competition showed real promise for flying together during competitions for the rest of the summer. Mike and Finn both finished mid table, a good result for a tough competition, especially considering a little bad luck at the end.

Mike and Finn will be back next year hunting down a podium finish, watch this space for results...

# Team Sponsor Profiles

The team are lucky to have the support of a fantastic selection of sponsors this year. The support given by the sponsors, in various ways, is not only helping the team get to the Worlds, but undertake the training required to ensure they can compete with the best pilots in the world. In no particular order:

**Lasham Gliding Society:** Lasham is one of the UK's top gliding clubs and among the largest in the world. This year sees the club host the European championships in which the senior team will be chasing top results. Lasham are generously supporting each of the pilots for this season.

**Naviter :** Naviter is the company behind See You and the Oudie, the favoured flight analysis software and navigation devices of top competition pilots. Naviter have generously provided the entire British Team with free software licences.

**NAVboys:** NAVboys are the official UK dealers for LXNAV avionics and are one of the UK's major suppliers for glider instrumentation and pilot equipment. Navboys are supporting the team in a number of ways, ensuring that the pilots and gliders are fully equipped with the latest gismos.

**Sydney Charles:** Long term sponsors Sydney Charles are aviation insurance specialists with a long history of supporting the British Junior Team. They will be supporting the Junior Team not only this year, but over the next three years.

**LXNAV:** LXNAV is a top level glider and GA avionics supplier. The entire team use LXNAV variometer and navigation systems and the company is supporting each of the pilots this season.

**British Gliding Association:** As the umbrella organisation for gliding in the UK, the British Gliding Association organises the national teams alongside its other vital functions of supporting glider operations throughout the UK. Without the support and funding provided by the BGA it would not be possible for teams to compete at these world championships.

## Upcoming events

The team have the following events coming up. Want to come along and see what it's all about? We'd love to host you at any of the following:

- **Team training week** – 27<sup>th</sup> May-4<sup>th</sup> June, Issoudun Airfield, France
  - The whole team, including pilots, crew and Team Captain, will be heading to France for a week of practice and coaching, hosted by British Team Coach and former World Champion Brian Spreckley.
- **Club visit & Presentation** – 7<sup>h</sup> June – Surrey Hills Gliding Club, Kenley, Surrey
  - Members of the team will be visiting Kenley airfield during the evening to introduce the British Junior Gliding Team and give a presentation on the Junior World Gliding Championships
- **Training weekend** – 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> June – Cambridge Gliding Centre, Gransden Lodge, Cambridgeshire
  - The whole team will be training together alongside the Cambridge round of the inter-club league. On Saturday evening the team will give a presentation before hosting a BBQ and party
- **Club visit & Presentation** – 14<sup>th</sup> June – Kent Gliding Club, Challock, Kent
  - Members of the team will be visiting Kent Gliding Club during the evening to introduce the British Junior Gliding Team and give a presentation on the Junior World Gliding Championships

- **UK Club Class Nationals** – 17<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> June, The Gliding Centre, Husbands Bosworth, Leicestershire
  - Tom, Jake and Team Captain Shaun will be taking part in the national competition for their glider class. This will be the ideal opportunity to practice team flying in a competitive environment.
- **French Club Class Nationals/Regionals** - 6<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> July, Issoudun Airfield, France
  - The whole team will be returning to Issoudun once again, but this time to compete. Jake and Tom will be flying the French Club Class Nationals whilst Mike and Finn compete in the Issoudun International competition being held at the same time.
- **10<sup>th</sup> FAI Junior World Gliding Championships** – 22<sup>nd</sup> July-13<sup>th</sup> August, Pociunai Airfield, Lithuania
  - After months of planning and training, what we've been waiting for – our chance to bring home the medals!

## Getting in touch

We'd love to hear from you. Whether it's just to check on the latest from the Team or you're interested in organising a corporate hospitality day, feel free to get in touch:



[sponsorship@glidingteam.co.uk](mailto:sponsorship@glidingteam.co.uk)



BritishGlidingTeam

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