



# British Gliding Association Annual Report 2025

# BGA Annual Report for 2025

## Contents

Chair Report	Page 3
Treasurer Report	Page 4
CEO Report	Page 5
Sub-Committee Reports	Page 7
Junior Gliding Report	Page 18

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Image – 18m National Champion, Derren Francis

## Chair Report

The weather gods smiled on us, delivering good flying weather for most of the season, together with a handful of exceptional, nay stunning, cross-country days. Congratulations to the many pilots who flew to places they don't normally go to, achieved badges or other personal bests.

I congratulate the **British Team** for a busy and successful season at World and European championships. See Competitions Committee report for details.

One of UK Gliding's major tasks this year was preparation for **Sailplane Flight Crew Licensing**. Several thousand applications for SPL licences were successfully processed by the BGA office. But that's not all; although in practical terms flying and instructing has not changed, the associated record-keeping and certification have. This was only achieved by much work in every club too and will take some getting used to. However, once bedded in, the new regime will be helpful to many in clarifying and standardising training requirements.

**BGA advocacy** to the DfT and CAA is continuous. We have been engaged with CAA for years on their imposition of 'Part66 L' certification of inspectors, for which training requirements are disproportionate, costs high, and the CAA's processes inhibiting. We have no option but to work within these regulations for now, but we continue to highlight the issues arising (primarily the difficulty in ensuring we have enough inspectors) and to propose alternative approaches.

**Participation.** Improved exploitation of social media and website refreshes (BGA's and clubs') were successful in increasing awareness of gliding; more newcomers were introduced this year. This is not a one-off project but a long-term evolution of our approach to marketing, contributing to the aim of ensuring UK gliding is sustainable.

**Development.** There have been uncomfortable reminders of the importance of security of tenure at gliding sites. Landowners are increasingly commercial in their outlook and often have more lucrative opportunities (e.g. solar farms, housing development) so it's vital for clubs to drive for long leases or freehold or to be ready to face the inevitable in other ways. Another long game!

**Thanks & acknowledgements.** I'm encouraged by the flexibility, ingenuity, and commitment shown in the operation and management of clubs and their willingness to help one another. I thank all those who contribute so much to their continued success.

I also thank all those, volunteers or professional, leading or participating in the activities to fulfil the BGA's mission, which is to help provide the environment in which clubs and pilots can flourish. Particular thanks go to David McGrath and Nick Garland (standing down after 5 and 6 years on the Executive Committee) and look forward to welcoming newly elected members.

I wish you all a safe and fulfilling year of gliding in 2026.

George Metcalfe - Chair

## Treasurer Report

The financial result for the year ended 30 September 2025 shows a healthy post-tax surplus of £68k (2024: £55k deficit). Whilst this is a favourable position to be in, it should be noted that the majority of this increase has been derived from the main (one-off) activity of 2025 – conclusion of the SPL conversion for several thousand UK glider pilots. Pleasingly, we've also seen an increase in the level of badge claims (above those driven by the deadline to apply for an SPL) due to a better-than-average soaring season in 2025.

We reached the seemingly never ending SFCL conversion deadline on 30th September, and with this comes a new world. The team have therefore put significant thought into the budget for 2026 and beyond, where we do anticipate a reduction in certificates issued and the associated changes in the makeup of income for the BGA.

We face unprecedented uncertainty in the face of inflation, interest rates, and also wider macroeconomic factors which naturally generates 'peaks and troughs' between years. The financial aim of the BGA has always been to achieve a broadly breakeven position, whilst maintaining a healthy balance sheet. The BGA reserves remain strong and have increased by the amount equal to the surplus generated this year. It is important to note that reserves represent the excess of assets over liabilities, rather than cash in the bank.

Cash and working capital balances remain strong, and the BGA continues to invest cash balances in such a way that their value is not diminished through inflation but allows utilisation of full FSCS protection. Year on year, the underlying cash position has remained stable (notwithstanding the reduction due to the transfer of £300,000 of the former Windrushers GC funds to the Philip Wills Memorial Fund), and the BGA continues to monitor this closely.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks to Peter Bishop, Liz Pike, Pete Stratten and the rest of the BGA team for the hard work they undertake in the background to support the accounting function of the BGA. I wish you all the best for 2026 and a happy, and safe, soaring season.

Sam Lazenby – Honorary Treasurer and Company Secretary

## CEO Report

It is a privilege to present this Annual Report on behalf of the British Gliding Association, reflecting on a year of significant activity and continued service to clubs and their members across the UK.

**Overview.** 2025 was another busy year. Our small but highly effective team of expert volunteers, staff, and contractors provided support across a broad spectrum of activities, including safety management, instructor and inspector support, aircraft owner support, club development, licensing and licence conversions, publications and member communications, certificates and badges, competition entries, seminars and training courses, S&G, public relations and promotional activity, and National advocacy. Detailed accounts of these activities are included in the individual reports of the BGA sub-committees. Thanks are extended to all those who contributed their time and expertise throughout the year.

The BGA continues to exercise careful cost control while identifying opportunities to strengthen delivery of its agreed strategy and maintain essential services to clubs and members. A detailed summary of the 2025 year-end financial position is provided in the Treasurer's Report.

**Pilot licensing and regulatory developments.** The BGA and the CAA General Aviation Unit continue to engage constructively including in supporting the implementation of the revised Sailplane Flight Crew Licensing (SFCL) requirements. The BGA's delegated Qualified Entity processes and procedures have adapted to ensure continued customer service, value, and regulatory compliance. As with previous regulatory transitions, experience suggests that significant pilot licensing changes take time to fully normalise within the user community. SFCL is unlikely to be an exception. Clubs and pilots are encouraged to consult the relevant BGA guidance. The BGA office can be contacted where additional clarification is required.

The Pilot Medical Declaration (PMD) is now established as an important element of recreational pilot medical standards. PMD users are reminded to remain current with PMD requirements.

**Continuing airworthiness and maintenance** support are core BGA activities. Approximately 1,900 aircraft are supported under the BGA Continuing Airworthiness Organisation (CAO), assisted by a nationwide network of BGA inspectors, most of whom serve as volunteers. In late 2025, the first mass five-year renewal cycle for CAA Part-66L licences resulted in a reduction of almost one-third of Part-66L licensed BGA inspectors. While some of the reduction reflects normal retirements, the significantly damaging factor has been the CAA's dogmatic approach to Part66L licensing and associated charging. We continue to advocate for proportionate and sustainable requirements aligned with the historically successful pre-Part-66L 'company approved' model.

Meanwhile, the BGA is promoting recruitment of new inspectors, encouraging uptake of Part-66L theoretical and practical training, assisting candidates in navigating complex processes and promoting pilot-owner maintenance where appropriate. Despite additional pressure on the BGA budget, to help to offset the CAA's high Part-66L renewal charges on our predominantly volunteer inspector community, we have introduced zero charges for BGA inspector authorisation where a Part66L licence is held. It is encouraging to note that candidates are

successfully passing Part-66L examinations, which are delivered by CAA-appointed BGA invigilators. Those interested in becoming inspectors, or former inspectors wishing to renew, are invited to contact the BGA office. Thanks to Dominic Newton for his outstanding voluntary contribution as BGA Part-66L Lead.

**Strategy and governance.** Following valuable input from member clubs and other consultees, work has progressed on a revised and simplified strategy document guiding the Association's future direction. Revised terms of reference for BGA sub-committees have also been consulted upon. Publication of both documents is expected in early 2026.

Gliding, like all air sports, depends fundamentally on volunteers. The BGA cannot function without their expertise and commitment. As experienced volunteers retire, renewal and succession are essential. Members interested in contributing to specific areas of activity are encouraged to come forward; our approach to volunteering is flexible. Thanks are extended to Executive Committee members retiring in early 2026, and a warm welcome is offered to newly elected members joining the Committee.

**External environment and advocacy.** The wider aviation landscape continues to evolve. Government aviation priorities increasingly focus on electric air vehicles, uncrewed aircraft systems (drones), and commercial air transport growth. Associated funding decisions inevitably influence CAA priorities, affecting the broader aviation community. At the same time, airfields face growing pressure from non-aviation commercial use and housing development. And planning policy is evolving. Collective representation and informed engagement at national level remain critically important to safeguard the future of gliding. Further details of advocacy work undertaken during 2025 are included within the sub-committee reports.

**Sporting excellence and recognition.** During 2025, individuals from BGA clubs were recognised through BGA and Royal Aero Club awards. The achievements and dedication reflected in award citations continue to inspire the gliding community. The presentation of BGA awards forms part of the annual Sporting Conference, to be held at Loughborough University on 28 February 2026. We look forward to welcoming you to this important event.

**Safety and looking ahead.** As the 2026 gliding season approaches, all pilots are encouraged to refresh their awareness of the inherent risks of flying and the mitigation strategies that protect us all. The BGA '[Safe Start 2026](#)' self-briefing is a strongly recommended 5-minute read.

Have fun during 2026.

Pete Stratten - CEO

# Airspace Committee Report

2025 has been another demanding year of engagement across a broad front, with the consistent aim of maintaining fair and safe access to airspace for gliding.

**Airspace modernisation and ongoing ACP activity.** Modernisation of UK airspace will be ongoing for many years to come. A central objective of airspace modernisation is to build capacity for forecast growth in commercial air transport while reducing holding, track miles, and associated inefficiencies, etc.

A positive aspect in many cases is that much of the revised routing between terminal areas lies in upper airspace above 7,000 feet. However, widened airways inevitably erode other airspace including class G and need to join with lower airspace around airports. As ever, early and informed engagement with change sponsors is critical. During 2025, the BGA engaged extensively with the complex Stage 3 Scottish TMA (ScTMA) airspace change proposals. Engagement at this stage proved challenging, with sponsors resistant to opportunities to better understand gliding needs. Nevertheless, our volunteer team worked diligently to pursue due process. In Yorkshire, the council funding the reopening of Doncaster Airport is sponsoring proposals to reinstate previously unnecessarily large volumes of controlled airspace to meet an aspirational need. Thanks to the local BGA team currently talking to the sponsor. At any given time, approximately 40+ Airspace Change Proposals (ACPs) are underway. It is not unusual for three new ACPs to appear within a single month. The scale and pace of change underline the importance of sustained and coordinated engagement, including working with the GA Alliance.

**National airspace design and CAP1616.** The UK's approximately 65 disparate Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) were never realistically positioned to coordinate effectively on complex, large-scale airspace redesign. Consequently, the Government has appointed NATS - a corporation with responsibilities to its commercial aviation shareholders - to operate a national airspace design service and to sponsor airspace changes. This begins with the modernisation of the London Terminal Manoeuvring Area (LTMA) and will, in time, extend across the UK.

The airspace change process is regulated by the CAA and governed by CAP1616. There is pressure from NATS to minimise the ACP process. Toward the end of 2025, the BGA submitted a detailed response to the CAA's consultation on proposed amendments to CAP1616. Our response highlighted significant concerns, including proposals to remove CAA oversight of early engagement between change sponsors and airspace users and the proposed removal of the Post-Implementation Review (PIR) stage. Both elements are fundamental to transparency, accountability and ensuring that airspace users are properly considered.

**Drones and electronic conspicuity.** Few glider pilots can have failed to notice the rapid development of uncrewed air systems (UAS), along with increasing concerns regarding their operational use. Driven by Government policy and public funding, the CAA is devoting significant resources to supporting the drone industry. The current approach appears to involve short-term implementation of segregated airspace and a longer-term aspiration for integration with crewed aircraft.



During 2025, the BGA responded to the CAA's consultation on its proposed Electronic Conspicuity (EC) Concept of Operations based on ADS-B equipage. As long-established and widespread users of FLARM, the gliding community recognises the safety benefits of EC and supports appropriate and affordable equipage. Discussion with air traffic controllers highlights that knowing where gliders are operating is extremely helpful and that displayed FLARM data is easily available. Current policy prevents ATC units from using FLARM data as a situational awareness aid unless displayed within an approved Flight Information Display (FID) system, using prescribed colours and formats. By contrast, a pilot verbally reported position may be used. Readers may draw their own conclusions.

**Letters of Agreement and CAP3096.** The CAA has identified that ANSP and CAA approved long-standing and successful Letters of Agreement (LoAs) are not identifiable in the Aeronautical Information Publication. They further concluded that many of these arrangements may not be compliant with SERA. While regulatory compliance is clearly important and desirable, it is worth noting that aviation operates with numerous established exemptions where justified. Nevertheless, the CAA has published CAP3096, setting out requirements for a substantial number of LoAs to be made SERA compliant via the CAP1616 process, but without allocating additional resource to facilitate this work.

At the time of writing, the BGA and affected clubs are engaging constructively with ANSPs to seek practical solutions. This has created additional workload for volunteers, and thanks to the clubs involved for managing this distraction alongside their normal operations.

**Looking ahead.** The BGA Airspace Committee benefits from a wide range of expertise, including air traffic controllers and commercial/air transport pilots. Collaboration across the Association remains essential. Even if your local flying appears unaffected today, change elsewhere can quickly have national consequences. All contributions and guidance from members are valued. After six years, it is time for a fresh approach and so this sub-committee Acting Chair will be standing down during 2026. If you are interested in taking on a challenging, rewarding and highly relevant volunteer role, please do get in touch.

Maintaining safe, shared airspace is a responsibility for every glider pilot. Having the legal right to operate in a piece of airspace does not necessarily make it wise to do so - particularly if unannounced. Please ensure that you understand the structure of the airspace in which you are flying, what else may be operating there, and how best to integrate safely. There is extensive published guidance and great training available. If you feel less than confident with radio procedures, the excellent BGA FRTOL courses are a helpful refresher and a proven route to gaining a radio licence. And as ever, please check NOTAMs before flight.

Pete Stratten – Acting Chair



# Competition & Awards Committee Report

From a committee point of view, 2025 has been deliberately low-key. The emphasis has been on supporting pilots, selectors and team managers through a busy international season, while maintaining stability in competition arrangements.

Rule changes have been kept to a minimum. The main exception has been a set of director and pilot considerations, which have been analysed and discussed at length within the committee. These are important areas, and the outcome of that work will be published in due course. In addition, some targeted updates to glider handicaps have been made, aligned with current European practice and experience, and intended to better reflect real-world performance.

Being on the committee can at times feel like firefighting, responding to issues as they arise during the season. Throughout this, the committee's role has remained clear: we are working on behalf of all competition pilots. Discussions are often robust and sometimes heated, particularly where strongly held views exist. The committee is made up entirely of volunteers trying to do the best job possible for the sport.

We are always open to hearing pilots' viewpoints and considerations and aim to do so in an approachable and constructive way. Looking ahead, we plan to hold an online Gliding Competition Committee forum next year to gather pilot feedback on several topics before any changes are made. Details will be published in due course — please stay tuned and take part to ensure your voice is heard. If you want to influence how competitions are run, the strongest way to do that is to engage with the committee — and consider joining it.

Three new members joined the Gliding Competition Committee during the year: Paul Kaye, Alistair Emson, and Oliver Ramsey. Alistair Emson has also taken on the role of British Team Manager, bringing current competition experience into the position.

The main story of 2025 has been the performance of British pilots on the international stage. This has been one of the strongest medal years for some time, with four teams competing across World, European, Junior and Women's Championships.

At the World Gliding Championships in Tábor, Czech Republic, the British team produced strong results across all classes entered and finished second overall in the Team Cup, winning Team Silver. Individual podium finishes were achieved by Jez Hood, who won Silver in Standard Class, Tom Arscott, who won Silver in 15m Class, and Tim Fletcher, who won Bronze in Club Class. Howard Jones, Leigh Wells and George White all contributed through consistent flying, helping secure the overall team result. Notably, both the Club and 15m class pairings were flying their first competition together, and the team remained in contention for overall victory until the final day.

At the Junior European Gliding Championships in Prievidza, Slovakia, Oscar Butlin and Oliver Ramsey competed in Standard Class, with George Downing flying in Club Class. While no medals were won, the competition provided valuable experience in difficult terrain and highly variable conditions.

The Women's World Gliding Championships in Zbraslavice, Czech Republic, proved technically demanding, with weak conditions and short weather windows. Jane Nash, Anne Soltow and Alison Mulder flew in Club Class, Jan McCoshin in Standard Class, and Liz Sparrow and Ayala Truelove in 18m Class. The team showed strong commitment, often flying on days when many competitors chose not to, highlighting the importance of team flying, sound decision making and effective ground support.

At the World Gliding Championships in Békéscsaba, Hungary, Matt Davis won Bronze in the 18m Class, the only medal achieved by the British team at this event. Andy Davis flew in Open Class, with Tim Jenkinson, while Steve Jones and Garry Coppin, and Peter Harvey and Roy Pentecost competed in 20m Class. While no further medals were won, there were several strong day performances against top international competition. A particular highlight of the event was seeing father and son, Andy and Matt Davis, competing in different classes at the same World Championship — Matt's first senior Worlds and Andy's final one.

With a strong season behind us, attention now turns to 2026. The focus remains on supporting pilots and maintaining continuity, while ensuring pilots are directly involved in shaping future decisions. The results this year demonstrate the depth and strength of British competition gliding across all age groups and categories and provide a solid platform to build on in the coming seasons.

Fran Roberts - BGA Competitions and Awards Committee

# Development Committee Report

**Participation and Marketing.** In 2025, the BGA launched a promotional campaign to boost public awareness of gliding. This included a major overhaul of the BGA website and a targeted social media initiative, which together increased website views from 1 million in 2024 to 2.75 million in 2025. These efforts, alongside other projects, halted the decline in sport participation and led to a modest increase in 2025. The BGA intends to continue these initiatives in 2026. Clubs that quickly submitted their 2025 membership data enabled analysis of growth trends. A survey identified strategies used by growing clubs, and these insights were shared with clubs experiencing declines, with ongoing work planned for 2026.

**Club Engagement.** The Club Development Conference in November 2025 drew 139 delegates from 44 clubs, focusing on participation. Thanks were extended to Alison Randle and Paul Jessop for their organizational roles, with support from the BGA Office. Regular Monday evening sessions engaged 404 attendees from 46 clubs, covering topics such as financial health, volunteer management, child protection, governance, social media, site safeguarding, project planning, funding, welcoming new members, CASC training, and managing first flights. The Expanding Horizon's team (Marilyn and Suzzanne) worked with nine clubs in 2025, providing guidance on external presentation, grant applications, and community engagement. One club reported an 18% membership increase as a result. The team plans to visit six more clubs in 2026.

**Site Security and Planning.** Site security remains a concern. Despite being recognized as a regional Significant Site for Sport and listed on the Strategic Airfield Network, the BGA lost Kirton in Lindsey (Trent Valley Gliding Club) in 2025, as the landlord returned the site to agriculture. Wormingford (Essex and Suffolk Gliding Club) is also at risk. The BGA emphasizes the importance of club site ownership or long-term leases and is working to help clubs achieve this. A project led by Craig Lowrie surveyed clubs to identify areas lacking secure sites, aiming to ensure club availability within reasonable travel distances. The analysis revealed that few clubs in these areas can afford site purchases, guiding future efforts to strengthen airfield infrastructure.

The BGA is also addressing threats from renewable energy projects: three clubs face challenges from new pylons, four from nearby solar farms, and one from a wind farm. Policy documents are under review, and discussions are ongoing with National Grid regarding guidance for pylon routes near gliding sites. A new safeguarding template is available for clubs to engage with local planning authorities. The BGA is also responding to changes in the National Planning Policy Framework, which may ease development restrictions. The organization continues to collaborate with groups such as CAST, GAAC, the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Aviation, Sport England, and the Sport and Recreational Alliance (S&RA).

**Rates and CASC.** Over the past year, the BGA has prepared for the April 2026 business rates revaluation. Delays at the Valuations Office Agency (VOA) postponed draft valuations until November, and discussions to challenge anomalies are ongoing. The revaluation coincided with high post-COVID inflation, raising construction costs and land values, resulting in average rateable value increases in line with CPI. Some clubs were reclassified by the VOA, leading to significant rate increases, which the BGA is working to mitigate. The withdrawal of certain rate reliefs from April 2026 will further impact clubs, with alternative support measures only partially offsetting the increases. The BGA is also in discussions with HMRC, the S&RA, and other organizations about CASC regulations and gift aid.

**Junior Gliding Centres.** There are currently 40 clubs registered as Junior Gliding Centres (JGC), all reviewed in the past five years. While JGC status is not mandatory, the BGA believes it ensures strong governance for youth involvement.

**Women in Gliding.** In 2025, 25 clubs hosted National Women Go Gliding Days, yielding positive outcomes. Forty clubs now have a Women's Ambassador, and 12 have been accredited through the Women in Gliding (WinG) process. The Cloud 10 project featured flights for prominent women with strong social media presence, resulting in at least four new female glider pilots. Annual returns indicate a slight increase in women's participation.

**Acknowledgements.** The report concludes with thanks to the Development Committee. My thanks to Yvonne Elliot who stepped back in September after many years of valuable contribution for work on JGC, WinG, and disability gliding. I would also like to thank Roger Bagley who stepped away from the Committee, but he will provide ongoing advisory support on rates and planning.

Dave Latimer - Chair

# Instructing & Examining Committee Report

2025 has been a year of significant change for the Instructing and Examining Committee. The transition to SFCL on 30th September marked a major milestone with BGA Instructor Ratings passing into history; to support this change, the committee has delivered key initiatives to support instructors, examiners, and clubs during this period of transformation that commenced over 10 years ago.

The transition to SFCL on 30th September represented a major regulatory shift for the gliding community. This change required significant planning and adaptation by instructors, examiners, and clubs to ensure compliance while minimising disruption, throughout 2026 the committee will continue to observe how SFCL bedding-in affects training and licensing, offering support where needed and maintaining dialogue with the CAA on any emerging issues.

Strong feedback from members and persistent lobbying by the BGA resulted in the successful retention of the Basic Instructor allowing for an amendment to legislation introduce the Basic Instructor (Sailplanes) certificate. This decision safeguards an accessible entry point for new instructors and supports the sustainability of instructional capacity across clubs.

The much-awaited revised Instructor Manual, was published online, delivering updated standards and best practices for instructional activity. This resource is designed to improve consistency and quality across all training environments. Whilst we acknowledge the desire for a printed version it is necessary for the new manual to bed in against the significant changes SFCL have introduced before considering committing to a print run.

The year saw the highest number of instructor ratings issued since the transition to the modular system in 2014, possibly due to individuals bringing their training forward because of uncertainty beyond 30th September. This surge, combined with the changes expected in 2026, is likely to result in a short-term decrease in demand. At the same time, there has been strong interest in becoming Flight Instructor Coaches (FIC). While demand typically drops following major changes, the BGA remains well positioned to meet any future need for instructor training with the continued support of BGA clubs.

FI(S) seminars are now delivered online at a rate of two per month, improving accessibility and supporting rolling recency requirements. This approach has been well received and reduces barriers for instructors maintaining compliance. Online delivery is expected to remain a key feature; however, some clubs are now seeking to offer this and with appropriate standardisation this will make a positive contribution.

The past year has demonstrated the resilience and adaptability of the instructor and examiner community during a period of significant regulatory change. The committee's efforts to retain the Basic Instructor role, update key resources, and expand training opportunities have ensured continuity and progress.

Looking ahead, the focus will remain on supporting instructors and clubs, maintaining high standards, and responding to evolving requirements under SFCL.

A key additional target for next year is develop an improved system of developing and maintaining standards in the examiner body to support the clubs on-going requirements.

The strong engagement seen in 2025 provides a positive foundation for continued development in 2026.

Rose Johnson – Chair

Stu Naylor – Training Standards Manager

# Safety Committee Report

The Safety Committee continues to analyse accidents, produce and disseminate safety advice and training material, and support the Instructing and Examining Committee's development of the training syllabus, including revisions to the Instructor Manual.

**Analysis.** Our accident database and report archive, which contains almost all accident and incident reports from the last 50 years, continues to provide a rich evidence base for safety analysis and development, supported by a positive no-blame reporting culture that is actively promoted by our network of dedicated Club Safety Officers (CSOs). We continue to provide support to AAIB accident investigations and engage regularly with colleagues from other countries through the European Gliding Union Safety Working Group.

**Communication.** CFIs, instructors and coaches continue to remain a key line of communication as well as an invaluable source of practical advice and considered wisdom. In addition, the BGA provides direct communications to pilots. We continue to work closely with other Sub-Committees to engage, learn and inform about safety aspects and key messages, and develop the advice collected in Managing Flying Risk – a live document that has further evolved during 2025.

The series of topical 'Straighten Up & Fly Right' articles for S&G continues, and have provided advice on parachutes and their use, interruptions and distractions, the importance of following a well-thought-out circuit pattern, winch launching, field landings and a wide-ranging quiz.

A further clutch of CSO seminars will be held in 2026.

**Accidents.** We were pleased to record no fatalities this year, though 5 pilots received serious injuries, all but one in landing accidents. 21 aircraft sustained substantial damage, though for the second year this is a significant reduction on the previous rate – a trend we have yet to understand. A summary of this year's accidents and incidents will be published in the 2025 Accident Review.

**Thanks.** I would again like to thank CSOs and regional teams for relentlessly promoting safety at club level; and numerous individual pilots and instructors for personally adopting and promoting a positive safety culture, diligent reporting, and safety-related suggestions. I would also like to thank the members of the Safety Committee, BGA accident investigators and the Instructing and Examining Committee for continued help and wisdom. I'm particularly grateful to Nick Bowers who, after several years providing painstaking support of our database and its analysis, will shortly pass the task on to Harry Entwistle; to Edward Lockhart for his succinct and readable accident/incident summaries in S&G; and to John Hull for maintaining contact with CSOs throughout the year.

Safe flying in 2026!

Tim Freegarde - Chair



## Technical Committee Report

The BGA's role in delivering the full airworthiness processes for UK gliding continues as delegated by the CAA. This year's report expressly addresses our principal preoccupation: the continuing supply of competent persons to underpin the fundamental requirement of delivering a robust airworthiness system and oversight at the point of use.

**Inspector licensing.** While all our extant BGA inspectors in 2020 were accredited with the required CAA 'Part66L' engineer's licence, the first renewal fee imposed by CAA has been found to be prohibitive for many BGA Inspectors. Further, we remain concerned as to the geographic and age distribution of qualified persons.

But our greatest concern, going forward, are the criteria set by CAA for the inception of new Part66L inspectors. CAA has accepted the principal of a BGA managed autonomous qualification process, and this has been trialled by several enthusiastic individuals with BGA support. Nevertheless, the qualification requirements set by CAA demand a level of study and demonstrated practical experience well beyond our previous regime, which has validated itself over decades of operation. The BGA through Chief Executive and CTO continue to challenge these unjustified demands.

**Club role.** Notwithstanding this policy impasse, at a practical level success will ultimately rely on club and individual involvement if we are to progress the present situation. First and foremost, any club which recognises that self-help is the key to an economic and safe operation must consider their support and the requisite facilities for the encouragement of the supervision of involvement of members.

For some years now, Gordon MacDonald, our CTO, has run highly successful courses in 'Pilot Owner Maintenance', taking advantage of opportunities in extant regulation to enable self-regulated activities to enhance operational convenience and safety. Such courses are now being reconfigured and broadened to roadshows, on-line interactions to build existing and new resources. Further courses will include details of the revised educational syllabus and hands-on training projects, ultimately leading to qualification as a BGA Chief Engineer, necessary as an authorised signatory for the airworthiness of Part 21 sailplanes.

These developments were given a welcome publicity boost at the BGA Club Development conference in October when both Gordon and Dominic Newton, our first successful 'new' Part 66L licensee, gave details of the format, study and work necessary to achieve the new accreditation. Work is now in hand to take such presentations directly to clubs and groups of interested individuals. Details are available from BGA officers, RTO's and from Gordon, our CTO.

**Airworthiness activities.** The ongoing issue with Pawnees, now under an Argentinian TC holder, appears to be finally clarifying, and Eurofox issues are being coordinated with the LAA and BMAA. We have also had significant maintenance and life issues with Polish sailplanes including Puchacz and Junior types.

We are currently considering a simplifying revision of the annual inspection and renewal paperwork, which might also include establishing common documentation for both Part-21 airframes and the vintage non-Part 21 fleet. We are strongly concerned to make this a less painful project than some of the changes raised in the 'European' era, but we cannot expect to please everyone!

**Thanks.** As ever, our thanks to Regional Technical Officers (RTO's) who continue to provide valued technical advice at the membership level over wide aspects of the technical side of gliding. We are always looking for volunteers who are interested in becoming an RTO; please contact Gordon MacDonald for more information. Additionally, thanks to Dominic Newton for taking up the role of informing those interested in the intricacies of Part-66L requirements. If you are interested in supporting Dominic in that interesting activity, please get in touch via [part66lead@gliding.co.uk](mailto:part66lead@gliding.co.uk) . Concerning ongoing quality oversight including on behalf of CAA, we are also indebted to Keith Morgan and Andy Brind and their team. We also thank the BGA Head Office who maintain a timely airworthiness process and all who support the airworthiness system.

Howard Torode – Chair

## Junior Gliding Report

**UK Junior Gliding Winter Series 25/26.** The 2025 season has been another great year for UK Junior Gliding, kicked off by a busy second and third rounds of the Winter Series. The 2025 Denbigh Winter Series saw 139 entries, making it one of the busiest events to date! We experienced challenging conditions, but thanks to the help of Chris Gill and others, we managed to fly all three days. This event also saw visiting pilots from both Denmark and the Czech Republic!

The third round of the 24/25 Winter Series was held at Edgehill Gliding Centre, another busy event, with 165 flights. Conditions were mixed over the course of the weekend, with soarable weather for most of the event. The First round of the 25/26 Winter Series was held at Scottish Gliding Centre, at Portmoak airfield. It was a successful weekend, with Juniors experiencing ridge and wave flying and gaining height claims for badges.

**The UK Junior Nationals 2025.** The UK Junior Nationals were held at Cotswold Gliding Club, Aston Down airfield. With a week of challenging conditions, Henry Inigo-Jones became the UK Junior Champion for the second time, followed by Oscar Butlin in second and Oliver Ramsay in third. The weather varied throughout the week, with some very challenging overcast days, and some days seeing fantastic soaring conditions. There was also a Regional competition underway at Aston Down, with many former Juniors flying in that competition.

You can read about the Junior British Gliding Team in the Competitions Committee report.

**BGA Junior Competition Coaching 2025.** This year, the BGA two-seat coaching saw almost 50 applicants for the unique opportunity of flying alongside and being inspired by the Junior National and Regional competition activity at Aston Down. Thank you to the continued support of dedicated coaches and clubs and the BGA funding for this annual initiative. Junior pilots would not get this chance without that support.

**More thanks!** We would like to thank everyone involved with the organisation of the UK Junior Nationals and Cotswold Regionals, the gliding clubs, owners of two-seaters, and instructors who welcome and join us throughout the year for the Winter Series events. UK Junior Gliding runs on the volunteering efforts of many people, past and present, who have grown it into the success that UK Junior Gliding is today.

Lucy, Anne and Jono – UK Junior Gliding