

Booker Gliding Club Newsletter



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The sun does shine

As I write this at the end of August the skies are still overcast and we will not need experts to tell us that this was one of the worst Augusts on record. As I am sure you realise, such gloomy weather does not do much for the club finances and this month we will fall short of our budget.

Well, that is the bad news – now for the good. June and July produced excellent figures and in all categories of income we were ahead of or equal to budget. The fuel surcharge has alleviated the increased price of fuel and we have managed to contain costs.

September is unknown, but you will recall that last year it produced some of the best soaring days for the year and I am hoping that this will be repeated this year.

I now expect a much better out turn for the financial year than I had projected in the Spring and I am confident that we will have a positive cash flow for the year.

Our income comes from five sources, all of which are critical to the well being of the club. In order of importance they are:

- Membership and facility fees
- Flying of club gliders
- Course sales
- Trial lesson sales
- Flying by privately owned gliders

I recently looked at the statistics of all gliding clubs and compared Booker's position on a national basis. We come out top for hours flown and rank 3rd or 4th for club gliders, private gliders, and tugs, but in membership numbers we are at 11th. This indicates to me that at Booker we have far better facilities for members than virtually any other club in the country. Although the hours flown are a reflection on the quality of our cross country pilots, they are no doubt helped by having four tugs available for those very special days. Our membership fees provide the backbone of our income and I would like to see a small increase in our membership.

Our club single seaters are still under-utilised and this availability could prove attractive to any qualified pilot who does not own their own glider. Twenty new members would transform our financial position and make life much easier for the Treasurer! When you read this, please pass it on to other gliding friends so that they can be aware of the facilities that we can offer plus being so close to London.

Graham Morfey, Treasurer

Instructor Renewals

It's that time of the year again when the club will be asking for your instructor returns. I'm usually bombarded with questions regarding the amount of hours solo/instructing that is required. In an attempt to get ahead of the drag curve with this, the requirements are listed below. If you haven't met these yet there's still plenty of time to do so.

Basic Instructor (BI)

Minimum 20 hrs and 30 launches in previous 12 months, of which 5 hrs OR 25 launches should be instructing and 10 hrs OR 50 launches should be solo.
Annual check flight with CFI or BI coach.

Assistant Instructor (AI) and Full Rated

Minimum 20 hrs in previous 12 months, of which 10 hrs and 25 launches, OR 100 launches, should be instructing and 10 hrs and 10 launches, OR 50 launches should be solo

Standardisation check with CFI at an interval not to exceed 3 years and a refresher course every 5 years.

Mike Collett

The *down* side of gliding

Saturday the 23th of August started bright and clear just as forecast and by 9.00 o'clock the sky wasn't bursting with cumulus giving confidence that it wouldn't overcook and was worth having a go at a 500k.

This year 500k days have been a bit thin on the ground and despite being retired I still seem to have been booked to do something on the very few days which have turned up, the result being that instead of doing a few as normal I hadn't even done one. With that in mind I thought I'd have a go at my favourite slim line triangle of either Bullington-Gainsborough or Gainsborough-Bullington. I've seen Bullington plenty of times this year but not Gainsborough. So GAI-BUL was declared.

Cloud base was just over 2500 and the climb I'd found on tow had been strong enough to give me further confidence in the day. I started at 11.36 and reckoned on it taking somewhere between 2 and 2.5 hours to get to Gainsborough.

Even with a low cloud base the climbs were strong and close enough together to give a feeling of security about the day and the task. Approaching Hus Bos the cloud base had gone up to just over 3000ft but it was obvious that it would tend to spread out. So the order of the day from now on was to climb high and stay there. Sounds easy don't it.

North of Newark the cu looked a little less promising but the sun was on the ground in a few places. I'd had 4knots to 4000ft just past Newark so, what the heck, no point in chickening out now. A longish glide which turned into a worrying moment checking fields, and then the sunshine gave me 4knots to 4000ft. I turned Gainsborough and found another climb to 4000 feet. The time was 13.54 which meant I was still in my time frame.

Looking south along track and it was remarkable how quickly the sky had turned to an even grey with not a sign of embedded cumulus. Oops, still, to the SW there was an edge to the grey, running NW/SE which had beyond it a sky which would cheer the heart of any cross country pilot.

For the next 22 minutes, a very peaceful glide took me the 38k to Ollerton where I'd watched a cloud build, once under the cloud and over the town there was nothing. At 800ft all I could do was fly around over the town trying to find anything at all. It wasn't to be and so, and when the ground started to become an obstruction I had to give up and land in the largest stubble field I'd seen in a long time. I was surprised to see after landing that the altimeter was at minus 200ft. Somehow I'd thought the ground would have been higher there. I'd landed at Boughton just outside Ollerton.

Well there I was, 180k away as the crow flies, knowing that Sally had not had a very enjoyable time towing the trailer on my last retrieve (last year) so when I spoke to her I tried to insist that I'd catch a bus/train back to High Wycombe. She wouldn't hear of it and insisted that she'd come and get me, and would bring the trailer if someone could help her couple it to the car.

I then rang the office and heard Shelagh's smiling voice. I assured her I was okay and didn't need anything other than someone to help Sally hook on the trailer. Next on the list - talk to the farmer. I'd seen a tractor leaving the farm and going down the lane just after I'd landed so I had a good idea where the farm was, or so I thought. Meanwhile I reckoned I needed a postcode to give Sally to key into our Tom Tom.

Down the lane from the field were several cars and two chauffeur driven Mercedes plus bride and entourage going into St Matthews, the local church. One of the drivers gave me the post code.

Eventually the tractor drove back down the lane and I spoke to the farmer, or so I thought. It turned out he wasn't the farmer that owned that field, but he said the farmer was a great fellow and wouldn't mind at all. Funny, the last time I'd been told that story was 20 years ago. A friend of the farmer and his daughter had both said 'no problem' but while I and my crew were de-rigging the glider the farmer drove up in his tractor and before I could say a word he launched into a 5 minute purple-faced tirade and drove away before I could even start to apologize.

I told the non-owner this, but he was sure it wasn't a problem, so much so that he just wouldn't give me a name, telephone number or address. I had no choice but to believe him.

That was it. All I could do was sit and wait. So. back to the glider, settle in, do a few Sudukos, Kenkens, Crosswords etc and look at an absolutely fabulous sky. Then the phone rang, it was Shelagh checking that everything was okay before she went home, lovely thought on her part. After about an hour I got bored and walked down the road to watch the bride and groom come out of the church for the wedding pictures and the confetti throwing. Eventually they all drove away and peace and quiet reigned. Walked further on to the main road to investigate the local, The Harrow Inn, it didn't sell real ale so I wasn't tempted. I sat and watched the traffic for half an hour, took a tour of the church grounds. I was fascinated by the colourful graveyard in which almost every grave seemed to have fresh flowers. After a walk round investigating names, ages and dates, I realized that virtually all the flowers on the graves were fabric replicas. They might be a cheat but they certainly looked good and brightened up the graveyard.

Sitting on the corner opposite the church the front slowly took over the sky, the wind freshened and it began to get cold. Would Sally arrive before it started to rain? I'd flown in a T shirt and shorts yet there I sat wearing my Anorak, cap and leather gloves and I was still cold. The church clock chimed 7oclock, and I thought, not long now, no phone call so everything must be okay. At seven twenty the car and trailer appear. Sally was happy, the journey had been easy, and all that remained was to get the glider in the trailer and drive home.

The one man rigging aid was a bit of a nightmare on the soft soil of the stubble field and kept trying to sink in and let the wing topple over. As I put the second wing in I heard the rain start on the trailer roof. My one thought then was to get the fuselage in, tidy up and get out of the field before it turned into a quagmire. A couple had driven into the field to watch how the glider was taken apart and put into the trailer. They were amazed that it went in and stayed to watch even though it was peeing down. They suggested that there was an easier way out of the field but as I'd had no problem getting in and up to the glider I didn't feel like taking a new route in the gloom and rain in case I sank in. They were driving a large 4X4!

All that was needed now was to drive the 150 miles home. The journey was uneventful with Jane (our Tom Tom's voice) guiding us home. We even beat the front with the rain easing the further South we drove.

The trailer was parked on its spot at Booker by about 11.50. Home at 12.15 and once we'd had a meal, bed around 1.30. It was a pretty slow average for the day with about 400k being completed in about 12½. A turbo would have given me the opportunity to climb away to a soarable bit of the sky, but on hindsight despite the fact I hate landing out, I still prefer a pure glider and am quite happy to take the rough with the smooth. Also I think Sally's confidence in bringing the trailer to my landout received quite a boost. Who says landing out isn't fun? Roll on the next good day.

Dave Caunt

Friday 15th August - One day of summer

For most of the summer the few good days have coincided with work, but for Friday 15 August the forecast looked good, and it just so happens that Friday is my day off. It appeared from the launch point that it was everyone else's day off too, or else there had been a sudden outbreak of 'sickness'.

It's been some long time since I did anything approaching a 300, so Andover-Pitsford looked about right on the map. I'm not very good at racing, I tend to get distracted by the view, but I made a real effort to crack on down to Andover, not stopping to turn in every thermal, and the energy was very nicely lined up on track. Having turned Andover and headed north, I noticed that my GPS had lost the signal. Now when I started flying x-c we did it all with map and compass and taking photos of turnpoints (much flailing around over motorway junctions trying to get the wingtip in the right place) and it all seemed perfectly normal. But I've got used to the (basic) technology of my Garmin 100 and without it I suddenly felt very lost. I could see Didcot but of course in a thermal I lost sight of it and (and the thermal) and in the general confusion soon found myself peeking into the windows of a village as I struggled in half a knot to climb away from the fields. Fortunately it turned into a good one and I was back on track, and the signal came back. Made me think a bit about how we take the nav aids for granted. The leg to Pitsford reservoir was slower as I was more cautious, and the view (it's what I fly for) was good when I got there. Trickleing back to Booker I found I had done 276k at 69kph, which for me, in an unballasted Peg, was a very satisfactory result. And the views were great.

Jane Moore

2nd European Advanced Glider Aerobatic Contest Held at Rothenburg, Germany

Whilst deciding which vintage glider to take to Austria for the Vintage Glider Club International Rally, an email arrived with an invitation to take part in a European aerobatic competition at Advanced level. As this level had just been introduced in the UK Nationals for the first time, I thought it may be fun to compete at the European contest as well. Also, as the comp was just before the vintage meeting, I could take the Lunak and go to both events. (That's the beauty of having a 60 year old competition glider!)

First problem. All briefings in German! (So, what's going on ??)

Second problem. The Chief Launch Meister. Imagine the Gestapo agent with glasses in 'Allo Allo'. Any rule I broke he was on my case! "You must call downwind, before landing". "I don't have a radio". "I will give you a radio so you can call downwind". "I don't want a radio floating about in an aerobatic glider". He was about to say something further when I interjected "I don't have a television, either!" At this point I knew that he would be watching my every move.

The next day 'Why did you cross the winch launch area? You must never cross the winch launch area!' I said 'But where is the winch?' Pause... "It is not out, but when it is out you must never cross the winch area!" I thanked him. On day three I had lost my security tag. "Graham, where is your tag?" "I've lost it" "But how do we know who you are?" When I pointed out that he had just called me by my name he gave a confused expression, followed by a look of resignation. From then on, when I broke a rule he just waved his hand at me. I knew I had won!

The days were long and hot (up to 38 degrees). Briefing 7.00am, first flight 8.00am and at the end of the day sometimes a briefing at 9.00pm for the next day's unknown program. The flying was very competitive with 50 pilots split evenly for the European Advanced Class and the German Unlimited championships. Unlike the UK, the German gliding clubs have taken aerobatics and competitions very seriously for many years.

I think turning up with a unique vintage wooden glider to compete against Foxes, Swifts SZD 59s Lo 100s and a Pilatus helped a lot with sympathy votes from the judges and also 'rattled' some of the competitors. I was lucky enough to finish 4th despite one disaster flight which was an unknown sequence with 2 figures I had never seen before.

In all, it was a fantastic competition and a very steep learning curve for me. I'm sure I will go to the next one in 2 years time, if only to wind up the Chief Launch Meister!

Graham Saw

There's still time to come to Aboyne.

Secure your place now with a £50 deposit. The dates are:

- *week 1: 28 Sept – 4 Oct*
- *week 2: 5 Oct – 11 Oct*
- *week 3: 12 Oct – 18 Oct*

For more information talk to David Richardson in the workshop or see the ads posted round the clubhouse.

Sales and marketing update

We are starting to think about our campaign for the festive season (yes I know it's only September but time flies). We are also looking into a link up with a company promoting flight training which could prove very productive. But of course the best way of advertising is by word of mouth. Every member can help with this, by mentioning gliding to friends and colleagues, providing leaflets and posters (all available from the office), and best of all bringing them to the club to try it out. Trial lessons for guests of members cost £53 including the fuel surcharge, a bargain. You can also help by being friendly and welcoming to our visitors at the launch point, explain a bit more about gliding to them, show them the price list and talk to them about which course would be most suitable. Most important, tell them how much FUN it is, the best way to make a convert is to share your enthusiasm for your sport.

Jane Moore



Who is the mystery man?

What is the strange symbol on the left?

And what is he trying to hide?

Club Communications

We use Yahoo email groups, which we encourage all members to subscribe to, in order to provide a quick way to communicate with the membership. Details are below.

Booker GC Forum – Open to all members to participate. The Forum provides the opportunity to share ideas about the Club. Send an email to: bookergc-forum-subscribe@yahoogroups.com and *include your membership number when applying.*

Booker GC Expeditions – Open to all members to participate. Send an email to: bookergc-Expeditions-subscribe@yahoogroups.com and *include your membership number when applying.*

Booker GC X-C – Targeted towards those pilots who fly cross-country or who aspire to develop their cross-country skills. Send an email to: bookergc_xc-ubscribe@yahoogroups.com and *include your membership number when applying.*

Booker GC Instructors – This is for Booker instructors only to easily email each other. Mainly used for swapping duty days. Send an email to: BookerGC_Instructors-subscribe@yahoogroups.com and *include your membership number when applying.*

The **Booker GC website** at www.bookergliding.co.uk has a Members Page. This contains the latest Club news snippets and links to previous newsletters, meeting minutes and several useful and informative Club documents. The Members page is accessible to everybody (not just members) but certain documents, such as committee minutes need a userid and password. To obtain these, go to the members page and click on the 'email Administrator' link. Don't forget to *include your membership number.*

For the latest news about what's happening check out
<http://bookergc.blogspot.com/>.

*** All view expressed within the newsletter are those of the contributor and do not necessarily represent the view of the Club or committee ***

Contributions to the newsletter are welcome. If you'd like to submit an article for a future edition please send it to William Parker by email at (william.parker5@btinternet.com).

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