

Booker Gliding Club Newsletter

Finish the
season on a
high. Aboyne
3 – 23 Oct



Contents

From the Chairman
From the CFI
Achievements in August
Sales and Marketing News
A first 50K
Thought for the day
Those magnificent men...

This month's issue has some important information for all members. In Geoff's article you can read about the committee's plans for a different way of operating for the club this winter. The Reverend Maxigat is back with a message from on high about flying in wave. And there are further reminders that the club's wave flying expedition kicks off soon – all levels of experience welcome. We have a great account of first 50K and a great picture from the world of vintage pilots (pretty ancient glider too).

William Parker

From the Chairman

Dear fellow Booker members,

Gliding, as a sport, touches and enhances the lives of all of us who are involved. For most of us it is a constant inspiration and provides us with infinite challenges to improve our performance. It provides hours of enjoyment, thrills and camaraderie. But on a worldwide and local basis it is a sport that faces threats. No more so than at Booker where we are blessed with a fine tradition of high performance gliding, but we must contend with threats to our existence from other airfield users, local councils, anti flying lobbies and the vagaries of UK weather and the economy.

Some two years ago we saw an exodus of members in search of a 'cheaper deal' elsewhere. The club faltered for a while but we picked ourselves up and soldiered on. Strangely the outcome was a stronger, more sociable and friendly club. Those who left can now be heard bemoaning the challenges faced by those clubs that they went to which looked like 'greener grass' at the time. The bottom line is: if you want to be a glider pilot, wherever you are in the world, you are going to have to fight a little to keep the sport alive. We have had news this week of two clubs who are on the brink of financial collapse and have appealed to the BGA for help.



So how do we stand? Well, despite the excellent efforts of our staff team and our sales and marketing team, the recession and the weather combined have taken their toll this season. We have seen a number of older members, who have previously renewed their membership without thinking, retire. We have been faced with huge maintenance challenges on our glider fleet, something of a legacy from previous make do imperatives. We have had lower activity levels due to weather and the effects of the recession have noticeably altered people's disposable income, or their attitude to spending it. If we project our current activity levels forward, with our current levels of fixed cost, we too could end up in financial difficulty. Your committee has been monitoring the position closely and is determined, once again, to ensure that Booker continues to thrive and flourish.

To do so, we need to take some strong and decisive action to reduce our fixed costs. We are considering a number of proposals in all our cost areas and it is our intention to put these before an Extraordinary General Meeting at the end of October. This will give each of you an opportunity to consider the options and have your say on how we operate going forwards. In the meantime, we are advancing into the winter period and we will implement a trial reduction in operations. The winter is naturally a low activity period. In the past we have remained fully staffed and operational seven days per week. This has often been very unproductive. We therefore propose to trial a reduction in our fully staffed activity to five days per week commencing 1st October. We will close the office on Mondays and Tuesdays. On these days there will no instructors or staff on duty. In the event that private members wish to fly they will be free to do so with self authorising privileges which will be outlined by Mike Collett.

We will advise the date for the EGM shortly. In the meantime if you have any thoughts or suggestions on how cost savings can be achieved please share your ideas with a committee member. See you at the launch point.

Geoff

From the CFI

It's with great sadness that we report that last month Martin Ffoulkes lost his battle with cancer. Martin was one of the keenest and hard working instructors I've had the privilege of working with. The club is grateful for his years of service as a member of staff until only very recently. At the present time the club is not aware of any arrangements but please keep an eye on the notice board for information should it become available.



Whilst the back end of August felt at times a bit like the winter had already arrived we have still had some very good days, including a 500km flight in the Duo at just under 100Kph and one member turning Snowdon! There are still likely to be good days left of the season so be ready to make the most of it, and no it's not too late for those people who wish to do their 5 hours!

Also, as the season does draw to a close the club's annual pilgrimage to Aboyne (and the occasional distillery) gets underway. It is not too late to sign up, however, the lists are filling up so don't leave it too long. If you have any questions please talk to Jane Moore or myself; it is a great experience for people of all abilities, even pre-solo pilots.

As you'll have read in Geoff's article the club is proposing to operate very differently through this winter, starting on the 1st October. The current plan is to close the normal club operation on Monday and Tuesday. However, on these days private owners with a Silver C and self authorising privileges can fly by arranging their own tug pilot. More information on how this will work, and the requirements for a self-authorising privilege, will be displayed on the notice board as guidelines are finalised. We hope that this will present a good solution, allowing training to take place mid-week, albeit during the latter part, but still allowing private owners to fly if they so wish. Happy landings!

Mike

Martin Ffoulkes

We are very sorry to have to pass on the sad news that Martin Ffoulkes died last weekend at his home. Many of you may not have been aware that Martin had been suffering from a very serious illness for some time. Only in recent weeks had this become apparent, such was Martin's determination to carry on regardless. Our sympathies go out to Martin's girlfriend Erica and to Peter his brother. Details of the funeral arrangements will be available at the club as soon as they are known.



Achievements in August

1st Solo

David Champredon
Bruce Giddings

Re-soloed after a break

Tim Jenkinson
Robert Grant

Silver Distance

David Humphreys
Will Hilton

Bronze Badge

Eric McLeod
Adam Clarke -cadet

Congratulations to all these members and their instructors.

New Member

Welcome to Sue Tuddenham who joins the club as a Full Member

Polylac and Plexus now stocked at the office

You can now buy both these products at the office.



Sales and Marketing News

BBC1 TV features Booker

Gliding will receive some welcome publicity on 4 September on the BBC1 Breakfast Show, with reporter Mike Bushell being given an introduction to glider aerobatics by Graham Saw. Will Hillton flew a sortie for the cameras, and Siena Whiteside contributed with an interview. This nationwide publicity for our very low profile sport should benefit clubs everywhere. Many thanks to Graham, Will and Siena for their part in making this happen. Pictures of the BBC visit are on the next page.

Aboyne 2010

If you haven't yet experienced the delights of wave soaring, or if you are a veteran of many visits to Scotland, we need to know if you are coming so that we can work out what to take with us. Suitable for all levels, including pre-solo, the club's annual expedition to Deeside Gliding Club is an excellent way to expand your horizons and extend your flying skills. Great flying, beautiful scenery, good food and accommodation, what more could you want for a holiday? If you are still in doubt, ask anyone who has been already. Don't delay, book today, put your name on the list in the office.

Jane Moore

A First 50k

Having been awarded the cross country endorsement on the Thursday, I told myself to wait for a *really* good day before attempting the Silver 50 km distance such that even I couldn't possibly fail to succeed.

The following Sunday looked a bit iffy to this very amateur weather forecast interpreter, but Mike C told me not to be such a wimp and head off towards Enstone.

I launched at the optimum time (i.e. when told to) and released at the prescribed 1600 feet (just at the point the altimeter needle jumped upwards by 150 feet ...). See point #5 below.

To avoid the potential embarrassment of being back on the ground within 5 minutes, I concentrated hard on trying to thermal smoothly and surprised myself by quickly climbing to around 2500 feet. At this point I set off in a North Westerly direction into wind and managed to lose most of the height gained at an equally impressive rate. Recovering the height resulted in me being blown straight back over the airfield. This happened a number of times before it finally dawned on me that I should follow the up-wind edges of the clouds (where the lift seemed to be) rather than just barrelling off in a straight line in the direction I wanted to go. At 3500 feet or so above Stokenchurch I finally plucked up the courage to venture beyond my known glider universe and head off towards Thame. Remembering what Steve Williams had told me about Thame town being a good thermal source, I spent a fair bit of time gaining height there, with one eye permanently fixed on the airstrip at

Haddenham. It was at about this point that I noticed the cloud was filling in noticeably from the West. Thanks to the “ignorance is bliss” approach, this didn’t deter me from continuing and following the railway line up to Bicester. South East of Bicester a couple of gliders I didn’t recognize helpfully pointed out where the thermals were, and with plenty of height to spare, I flew West over the airfield (happy that I was nowhere near Weston-on-the-Green).

A long time was spent thermalling over Upper Heyford (with a view to the 5 hours duration) before I set off along the main runway towards Enstone. A similar approach over Enstone failed dismally, and after dismissing the rather stupid notion of heading back to Upper Heyford, I spent some time watching the microlight and motor glider landings before landing myself.

I would like to think that the tower forgave my sin of landing on the tarmac runway when they saw my uncharacteristically nice landing however I suspect it was more to do with me smartly jumping out and pulling the glider off to the side of the runway. The hospitable members at Enstone came out to greet me and pointed me towards tea and cake in their clubhouse, which helpfully had a sign on the front door declaring it to be Enstone Aerodrome, thereby eliminating the little nagging doubt I still had!



Phew – Right airfield

Things to note down on the “don’t be such a prat the next time” list :-

1. Check the radio operation rather than failing to turn it on properly (the complexities of turning one knob clockwise clearly defeated me....) and therefore assuming that it’s not working and turning it off.
2. Don’t concentrate so hard on gliders thermalling beneath you that you fail to notice that you are climbing into cloud base. Oops.
3. Recognize the cause of a lack of elevator authority *without* needing to look down at the ASI (thankfully I was high, there was no one beneath me and the nose didn’t actually drop). Oops again.
4. Don’t forget that Mike C told you to land on Enstone’s grass runway to the South of the tarmac runway and then land on the tarmac runway itself (and fail to tell the tower that’s what you were about to do so because of #1).
5. Release well below the 1% height. Post analysis showed I had a whole 20 feet to spare!



FZA waits patiently for a tow home

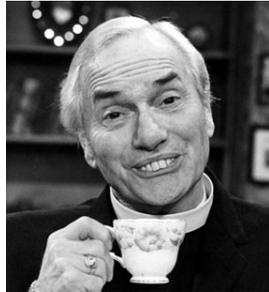
Thanks must go to Mike Collett for the cross country training and telling me to get on with it, Mike Richardson for helping me prepare, Phil Kellman and Bob Davey for coming to fetch me (especially Bob for flying FZA back on tow much to my relief) and all of the other people who offered valuable advice.

I realize that 50km is not much of an achievement in the grand scheme of things, but I ended the day feeling pretty chuffed with myself. More importantly I realized that it’s actually not that scary and not quite as difficult as I had feared.

David Humphreys

Radio (130.) 4's Thought for the day: The importance of preparation and asking the obvious questions

Presented by the very reverend Vicar Maxigat



I have a confession to make this month my children: I too have sinned. Yes, once I owned a Slingsby Vega. Christened "FNK" it was the vehicle for my introduction to XC flying and did actually have a number of favourable features, though what those were elude me now. My first competition some 20 years ago was at Sutton Bank where I performed so appallingly, landing out 8 days in a row in a 9 day competition, that the wags at Yorkshire GC nicknamed the pilot of FNK "F*@king No Klue".

Amongst other new experiences that week I flew for the first time in wave. Finding myself in smooth lift I called on the radio "hey, I think I'm in wave" to receive the reply "No Sherlock, look up" and upon doing so found the entire grid some 5,000' above me. A helpful soul then briefed me on the radio that the trick was to keep pushing into wind, which I duly did. I climbed near site to 7,000', pushed forward to the next bar, climbed, pushed forward following the instruction. The last bar I left was particularly strong and off I set West, looking forward to the next climb. It dawned on me I might be making a mistake when the ground starting getting close and a hasty bit of field selection resulted in me landing out next to High Force waterfall in the Pennines, some distance in front of the primary wave. I had of course pushed too far West and out of the wave system – if only I'd asked beforehand.

The morale this month then? It really does help to think things through before launching and there are no stupid questions. Plenty of people before you will have made ghastly mistakes and you will only look daft if you **don't** ask the obvious questions. Maybe worth remembering for any early pilots heading to Aboyne at the start of October... Bless you my children, and safe landings.

Okay, so it's a corny title but can you identify...

These Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machine?



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-subscribe@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 user i/d 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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