

TVGC Newsletter

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THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE...

Hello to all members once again.

I would just like to inform you all I have been in talks with the RAF camp and we may leave one half of the gate open, but we must be vigilant at all times. When leaving the site at night, the gates must be locked – I am sure you will all help me with this to ensure this instruction is carried out.

We are going to put 'A' boards outside the gate to advertise our wares and invite people in. It is most important that we increase our membership or, sadly, the club will die and we must not allow this to happen. I am, therefore, relying on all members to help in recruiting newcomers. Invite your friends for a flight – who knows, we might get a new member from it. We need flying evenings and even at the weekends we must encourage people to come and learn to fly. We will be producing some posters and I would like all members to take some and distribute them in the local area (garages, shops, libraries etc).

The Club now, in my opinion, has got everything – a motor glider, an extremely good fleet of gliders, a tug, a first class winch, a workshop and, of course, a warm clubhouse with all facilities. I intend to put a small cooker on the bus to enable people to get frozen pies and prepared meals out of the freezer in order that they can cook them on the bus, so there will be no excuse – if you want a hot meal you will be able to get one.

As you can see, a skip arrived on Wednesday and was filled with rubbish the same day – we must keep the site clean at all times – this means every member, not just the Committee or myself.

We do intend to have some more social functions this year. If you have any ideas of events that you would like to see, please let either Richard or myself know and we will try to organise it for you.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking Steve for all the work he is doing, not only as CFI, but with all the new glider regulations and repairs. Also a big

TRENT VALLEY



GLIDING CLUB

'thank you' to all the instructors and, of course, to Brian and his merry tug pilots.

A note for the future:-

I have already completed a questionnaire back to the BGA, but thought I would give you a resumé of what is happening.

Parachutes with Circular Canopies—It has come to notice that, as from January 2008, the British Parachute Association (BPA) will no longer provide training to its members in the skills required to pack parachutes with circular canopies or issue certificates of competence.

Compared with other sport aviation disciplines, there are probably more parachutes with circular canopies in use by the gliding movement and it is believed that many clubs and private owners have relied upon suitably qualified BPA members for the periodical repacking of parachutes.

It is understood that once qualified, BPA members will be able to continue to practice their skills but, with no newly qualified members and wastage of present members, the time will come when there will be no qualified BPA members to repack parachutes. How far into the future it will be before the change of policy by the BPA takes effect is not known. However, the change has safety implications and it is essential that other arrangements need to be made to ensure the continuing operational efficiency of parachutes and any failure to do so opens up the field of litigation in the event of a malfunction.

The General Aviation Safety Council (GASCo), of which the BGA is a member, has recognised the safety issues referred to above and has set

up a Round Parachute Working Group to examine the problem. At present, the BGA has little information about the arrangements clubs and private owners have in place for the packing and maintenance of parachutes.

When you have read this newsletter, please remember that without your help it will be very difficult to keep costs down. We cannot keep increasing the cost because, eventually you will say 'enough is enough'. There is only one way to keep the Club running and to spread the costs, and that is to 'recruit new members'. As Chairman, I take this responsibility extremely seriously and without repeating myself, we desperately need new members.

On a lighter note, with the soaring season round the corner, I wish you all happy and safe flying and keep a good look out – remember, it is better to cautious than sorry.

Vin Marchant, Chairman.



Marketing News

What's Wrong With Gliding?

It seems to me that there is very little not to like about gliding. I find it a joyous experience, a fascinating blend of technical knowledge and intuitive skill.

The feedback we get from trial flight customers about their experience is usually very good. And yet very few of them actually take it any further. But worse still, of those who do become new members, only 1 in 5 will stick at it long enough to become solo pilots.

Maybe the problem lies not with gliding, but with gliding clubs. More exactly, how we treat new entrants to the sport. I certainly didn't find being an ab-initio a particularly joyous experience. Lets be honest, for most people getting solo is a frustrating, time consuming drudge which is more of a test of your endurance and tenacity than your flying skills. And that is despite all the help and support you get long the way.

It is extremely difficult to get newcomers to buy into the idea of waiting around on an airfield for 4 or 5 hours, for what is often rarely more than 20 minutes actually in a glider, with an instructor.

When they realise that they will need to go through this process every week for many weeks to have any chance of ever going solo, is it any wonder that many decide to look for a different sport?

We could of course take the view that this is the traditional way and that people need to 'pay their dues', or that it is only fair if everyone sticks to the flying list. Does it need to be like this? Indeed, how can we hope to sustain the club with such an unappealing and inefficient process for training our new participants?

Dad's Army Syndrome

The 25 to 45 year age group is particularly under represented in our club. This is a shame because people in this group are often well established in their careers and can have high disposable incomes. But because of professional, family or domestic commitments, many struggle to find sufficient time to get through the ab-initio stage in gliding.

So we are left with a hardcore of middle aged or retired guys plus a few young lads. I think it is known as the 'Dad's Army Syndrome'. Like many clubs, we are feeling the double whammy of ever-increasing costs falling on a dwindling band of active members.

Whilst it is a predicament that is not unique to Trent Valley, some clubs are addressing the problem by looking at ways to make gliding more appealing to a wider section of the customer base. This may mean looking at the 'sacred cow' of the flying list system and how we might get people solo more expediently. I favour the system of having a number of book-able time slots for training flights running alongside the traditional

flying list on one day per weekend. My view is that this might help deal with the time issue and could benefit ab-initios, instructors and existing members alike.

At the moment, this view is not shared by many of my Committee colleagues, who feel that it could alienate existing members, but I have been asked to research what other clubs are doing and report back. I will also be canvassing views from members over the next few weeks.

Marketing Projects

I am struggling to find time to progress all of the marketing projects that we want to do this year. It would be a big help if one or two people could take responsibility for certain specific projects, for instance promoting our Corporate Day Packages to local companies or increasing the number of retail outlets we have for Gift Voucher sales.

Form an orderly queue, please...

Christmas Gift Voucher Promotion Scheme

The Christmas Gift Voucher sales promotion was won by Paul Holland, who netted himself an amazing eight free launches. The Committee has decided to make the incentive scheme a permanent fixture, so you can still net yourself some free launches ready for the spring. We are also planning to extend the scheme to encourage people to arrange Flying Evenings, sell Corporate Days or sign up new members.

Alan Spencer, Marketing Officer.



FLYING MATTERS FROM THE CFI...

Well we enter another year and hoping for some good weather, surely we deserve the one in a X years that is a classic soaring year.

Firstly my thanks to Parky who has stood down as my deputy for the last 18 months and has helped to support me in the task of CFI along with John Williams. I know some of the decisions maybe unpopular but I make no apologies for anything that continues to maintain our high safety record that we enjoy. I do consult with the instructors to gauge opinions before implementing the changes so in the majority of cases what comes out is not unilateral. Also, what is being advised by the BGA is also implemented. So please discuss with me any concerns or views you may have re flying matters. John Williams & Robin Parker are continuing as the DCFIs with Robin concentrating on the motorglider as DCFI MG.

The subject of "mirror" circuits is prevalent at the moment (especially as this is implemented at other clubs). After discussion with experienced Full cats it was decided not to implement this at TVGC due to the way we have local "hot spots" e.g Kirton, for the duty thermal. However, all are advised to conform to the same circuit as the MotorGlider and Tug that is to the east of runway 02/20 and south of runway 31/13.

The BGA is now recommending "WULF" as the pre-landing check so all are to use before entering the circuit.

The motorglider is now quite popular & those wishing to be signed up for X-Country will require a 1/2 hour or so Field landings checks to be carried out with the MGIRs which we hope to have up to 5 in the near future.

The Duty list has been made to ensure a MGIR is on the field either as a tuggy or instructor so this needs to be taken into account when exchanging duties. Please make every effort to attend your duties, this is important.

As you are aware the transition of gliders is now well underway, those of you with your own aircraft realise what an arduous task it is, I'm dealing with 6, the 5 club ships and my own so have some sympathy and help is still required.

I was pleased with the attendance of the mass de-rig and re-rig to put all the G regs on, Radios are now fitted in the K6E and the Puch has a new radio with Boom Mics. The panels have been altered with switches now UP for ON so take note of the legends. Also take more care when getting and out of the gliders to prevent damage to the panels/instruments (has anyone noticed the Grob radio has no MHz change knob?) - I could go on but we have the approaching AGM so this is the forum for me to talk to you all and the chance for you to bring your ideas to the committee of how to take things forward. The AGM is a two way conversation so please use it.

Dates for your diary:

- 2nd April Red Arrows over Kirton 1225-1305 Local (we will be GMT +1)
- 5th May 2008 for 1 week Task/Soaring week
- 24-26th May "Yellow Bung" at Saltby
- 12/13th July Return "Yellow Bung" at Kirton (spare 7/8th Sept)
- 19-27th July Northern Regionals at Sutton Bank This a good opportunity to compete so lets have a TVGC contingent
- 17-24th August National 2 seater Comp at Pocklington, Get a team together to compete

Finally, a well done to Ray and Dave B on dealing with an "uncommanded airbrake deployment" on the Puchazc which ended up with a successful outlanding with the occupants and glider undamaged. The motto is always expect the unexpected in flying.

Safe flying, Regards, **Steve Wilkinson, CFI.**