



BGA Engineering News

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RTO Appointments

I am pleased to advise that two new Regional Technical Officers have been appointed.

Ken Ballington for the Central North Region
Ian Hey for the Wales and West Midlands Region

Please join me in congratulating them and wishing every success in their important new role. Please offer them your support, they are there to assist you.

RTO Vacancy

We have an RTO vacancy for the **Central region**. This region covers distinguished clubs such as Aquila (Hinton), Chiltern (Halton), London (Dunstable) and Windrushers (Bicester) as well as a host of, no less important, smaller clubs. If you would like to offer your services please apply, in confidence, to the CTO, thanks.

Problems with BGA web site

Some people have been experiencing problems with the BGA web site (and probably others) where some of the short cuts, "Airworthiness Directives" in our case, don't appear on the screen, our webmaster has identified a possible common problem and is offering a simple fix:

"I think the problem is probably caused by Norton Internet Security. I think there was one version (maybe more) that came with advert blocking as standard when you install it. Unfortunately it's rather too aggressive and "breaks" lots of pages! It removes the airworthiness directives link because the page is called *ads.htm* and hence it thinks it might be an advert and blocks it. My advice would be to turn the ad blocking off as it will cause other similar problems. If you use Internet Explorer on windows XP, this does a pretty good job of stopping the pop up adverts and if you install the Google toolbar, that stops lots too, but neither will stop links/images from appearing in pages! Once you've turned the ad blocking off, you may need to refresh lots (or do ctrl-F5) to get the link back."

Maintenance Errors & Standards

It may be a perception but over recent times, we seem to have an increasing number of reported maintenance errors and poor standards, possibly the level is the same, but now more people are reporting – this is a good thing. We do investigate these reports and take appropriate action as necessary, but would also like to understand why they occur in the first place so we can "nip it in the bud" so to speak, before it becomes an issue.

Like the rest of Aviation, we are coming to terms with Human Factors and its influence on maintenance errors and why sometimes, standards drop. Our regulators also recognise Human Factors and are now including an HF policy in company approvals and awareness training in engineer licence requirements. We do know that the vast majority of maintenance errors are unintentional and have some HF element and to this end we are promoting a no blame culture and where possible offer redirection and training rather than punitive action. Obviously where malice and deliberate acts are concerned the situation is quite different, fortunately this is very rare.

To raise awareness of human factors, the BGA is reviewing what guidance and training we can provide to our maintenance personnel.

Request

There are several suppliers and training organisations that offer maintenance HF training, however these are aimed mainly at commercial operations and are relatively expensive. To address this problem we are looking for someone who is qualified to train Maintenance Human Factors, from within our membership if possible, who may be able to assist us producing something "in-house" that is more appropriate to our needs and funds that may be available. If you can assist us or know someone who may be able to help us please contact Jim Hammerton at cto@gliding.co.uk to discuss. Thanks.

AD Interpretation

Airworthiness Directives and supporting Service Bulletins (SB, TN, TB etc) are usually quite specific in content and applicability, however sometimes their translation in to English can be challenging!

We have to interpret the meaning sometimes but what we must not do is read something into the requirements that was not intended.

A recent occurrence was to install a castellated nut and split pin if a stiff nut was found. The AD and SB implied that there was a hole drilled in the thread in production. Some inspectors failed to find the hole as it was blocked with something hard and proceeded to drill a second hole. In one case the thread failed and the nut was lost. Nowhere in the AD or SB did it give instruction to drill a hole.

This is a simple case and illustrates the point rather well, even though drilling a split pin hole is a simple engineering task, it can be inappropriate. (Another Human Factor?)

BGA Conference - Date for your Diary

The conference will be held on Saturday 10 March 2007. The venue for the conference has been changed this year to Hellidon Lakes Hotel and Country Club, nr Daventry. More details on the BGA web site <http://www.gliding.co.uk/bgainfo/notices/conference.htm> and in S & G As usual I shall be there with the RTO's to answer your questions and queries.

Seasonal Advice

Summer is now a distant memory and I hope you completed all those projects you started!

You have probably noticed the excellent season for fungi. The fields are sprouting huge mushrooms. Now, I am not going to tell you which ones are best for breakfast and what to avoid! but the warm damp spell will also promote fungi and micro organisms (though probably not mushrooms!) in other places. Inside the trailer or worse still inside your glider.

If a glider is put away wet the best advice is to take it out again as soon as the next drying day comes along and allow it and the trailer to dry thoroughly.

Make sure the ventilation in the trailer is adequate and working. It is no good blocked with cobwebs and leaves. Can the air circulate freely under the trailer, you might have mowed the grass during the summer but see how it has been growing over the last month or so.

Fungal attack can be very subtle, with luck, a keen sense of smell may sniff it out, but if like me, you have sniffed too much dope over the years, your sense of smell will be less efficient!

Black mould can be signs of fungal attack but there are plenty more signs and smells. Seek further advice if fungal attack is suspected.

Most wooden structures are usually protected on the inside by a thin coat of dope. After repairs or if this coating is damaged it should be replaced to maintain a barrier between the wood and fungal spores or dampness.

Don't forget the upholstery in modern gliders, perspiration (sweat, to you and me!) will quickly rot even synthetic fabrics and are liable to have been soaked during the hot weather. Consider washing using soap flakes (Lux or Sturgene), Detergent is not recommended as it may adversely affect the fabric.

One other point to consider, if the wood is damp it is heavier and this will reduce the sometimes-tight cockpit load to remain within the weight and C of G limits.

Jim Hammerton
Chief Technical Officer