



## **News Release**

Leicester, Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2017

### **World Gliding Gold for British Pilot Russell Cheetham**

Russell Cheetham is the new World Open Class gliding champion. Cheetham secured his victory and a first world gliding medal to go with two previous European Championship victories after a dramatic final day of competition at Benalla in the Australian State of Victoria. Cheetham will be joined on the podium by his team mate Andy Davis who finished in the bronze medal spot.

In addition, a strong all-round performance saw the 6 man British team, who were competing across all three classes, win another World Team Cup.

Britain's Mike Young won his third world championship medal by finishing third in the 18m class, with team mate and two-time world champion Steve Jones seventh. In the 15m class, Derren Francis finished 6<sup>th</sup> in his first world championships, with Ed Johnston 32<sup>nd</sup>.

Cheetham and Davis went into the final day's race having held first and second place since midway through the two week long competition. The leading pilots all gambled on a late start believing that these would give them the best conditions. However, the strategy backfired allowing many of the early starters to creep up the overall standings. Despite only managing 19<sup>th</sup> place in today's 302km race, Cheetham's earlier lead was sufficient so see him holding onto the gold medal position. Davis' 21<sup>st</sup> place saw him leapfrogged for the silver medal by the defending champion, Germany's Michael Sommer, who finished 18<sup>th</sup> today.

Both pilots flew extremely consistently throughout the two week long competition. In a marathon competition like the world championships, where the daily courses ranged from about 200km to over 750km, it isn't necessary to win every race - rather to come out of every race with most of the points available. Prior to today, both Cheetham and Davis finished in the top 10 in every race except one.

Ends

**Results overleaf**

## **34<sup>th</sup> FAI WORLD GLIDING CHAMPIONSHIPS**

### **Final Results**

#### **Team Cup**

1. Great Britain - 898.46 points
2. France - 887.92
3. Poland - 772.00

#### **Open Class**

1. Russell Cheetham (GBR) – 6562 points
2. Michael Sommer (GER) – 6549
3. Andy Davis (GBR) – 6520

#### **18m Class**

1. Killian Walbrou (FRA) – 6607 points
2. Mario Kiessling (GER) - 6514
3. Mike Young (GBR) - 6480
7. Steve Jones (GBR) - 6403

#### **15m Class**

1. Sebastian Kawa (POL) - 5417 points
2. Makoto Ichikawa (JPN) - 5281
3. Lukasz Grabowski (POL) - 5222
6. Derren Francis (GBR) - 4961
32. Ed Johnston (GBR) - 3727

#### **Ends**

## Editors' Notes

1. UK Gliding is administered by the British Gliding Association. More than 75,000 people in the UK participate in gliding every year and over ½ million glider flights are undertaken each year in the UK.
2. International gliding championships take place over a 10-14 day period. Each day, the pilots fly a different course, typically of up to 600km in length. Points are awarded each day and, at the end of the championship, the pilot with the highest aggregate score is declared champion.
3. For further information about competitive gliding, please visit [www.gliding.co.uk/press/index.htm](http://www.gliding.co.uk/press/index.htm) or contact:

TODAY (Saturday until 1300) ONLY  
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4. The BGA web site is at [www.gliding.co.uk](http://www.gliding.co.uk) and the British Team web site, which includes pen portraits of the pilots is at [www.britishglidingteam.co.uk](http://www.britishglidingteam.co.uk)
5. The championship web site where full results are available is at [www.wgc2017.com](http://www.wgc2017.com)