

For immediate release

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TEAM GB ANNOUNCES TOP WOMEN PILOTS TO COMPETE IN WORLD GLIDING CHAMPIONSHIPS

BRITAIN'S top women pilots are planning to soar to success after being selected to represent Team GB in the Women's World Gliding Championships (WWGC) in Australia next year.

Ayala Truelove, Melissa Andersson, Liz Sparrow and Claudia Hill are now honing their flying skills ahead of the competition.

Graham Garnett, British Gliding Team Manager, said: "We have a very strong team going into this competition with each pilot being at the top of their game in the sport."

Liz Sparrow, 57, from Romsey in Hampshire has been the highest ranked woman in world gliding and is the most experienced member of the team having competed in seven international championships.

Liz said: "It's great to be a part of the team and a real privilege to be representing my country.

"Whilst we're all going into this competition to win medals for the UK, we'll also be encouraging more women of all ages to discover gliding to raise the profile of the sport and redress the gender imbalance as currently only seven per cent of glider pilots are female."

Claudia Hill, 46, from Didcot, Oxfordshire, is currently the UK's highest ranked female glider pilot and has achieved a top ten finish in the last two consecutive World Championships.

Ayala Truelove, 53, from Tadley in Hampshire, first tasted international competition in 2009 during the Women's World Gliding Championships in Szeged – finishing an impressive fourth in her first outing.

Melissa Andersson, 44, a member of London Gliding Club, has captained the women's gliding team at competitions in Sweden, France and the Czech Republic.

All four pilots were chosen by a selection committee using criteria based on UK competition results and success in coaching programmes held throughout the year.

The international competition to find a women's world gliding champion will be held over 14 days and includes a practice week for the pilots to familiarise themselves with the local gliding conditions and terrain.

Justin Craig, British Gliding Team Captain, added: "The overall winner and new world champion will be the pilot with the most points scored during the competition period. Points are awarded daily to the fastest pilots around each day's given cross country task, typically between 150 kilometres to 500 kilometres long, taking approximately 3-6 hours to complete and at top speeds of around 150 kph."

The newly-formed British Team will compete in the 10th FAI Women's World Gliding Championship in Australia at the Lake Keepit Soaring Club from 4th January 2020 to 17th January 2020.

The 11th FAI Women's World Gliding Championship will be held at The Gliding Centre in Husbands Bosworth, Leicestershire, in 2021.

For more information about the pilots and the British gliding teams visit

www.team.gliding.co.uk and follow them on:

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/britishglidingteam/>

Twitter <https://twitter.com/GBGlidingTeam>

Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/britishglidingteam/?hl=en>

Ends

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Women's team announced for WWGC2020

MEET THE TEAM

The British Gliding Team selected for the Women's World Gliding Championship in Australia.



Gliding - key facts

- The British Gliding Association (BGA) is the governing body for the sport of gliding in the UK and represents more than 80 gliding clubs stretching from the Highlands of Scotland to the south-west tip of Cornwall in England.
- A glider is an aircraft that doesn't need power to fly. Gliders fly by gliding gently down a slope causing air to flow over the wings, which generates a force that supports the weight of the glider. The steeper the slope, the faster the glider flies. By flying in rising air, for example a thermal, a glider can gain height.
- The longest distance ever flown in a glider in one flight is 3,008km, taking 15 hours and eight minutes at an average speed of almost 200km/h in South America.
- Gliding is an inclusive sport and enjoyed by people of all ages and physical abilities. Subject to completing the required training, you can fly a glider solo at age 14. There is no upper age limit with some glider pilots still flying in their early nineties!
- Gliding brings the science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) agenda to life to inspire the next generation of pilots and engineers using the principles of aerodynamics and lift which keep an unpowered aircraft airborne.