

# British Gliding Association Annual Report 2016



## Chairman's Report

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Both my physics teacher and father pointed out that time is not a constant. Reflecting on the speed this last year has passed, it seems they're right.

Over the last few years, the relationship between the BGA, clubs and pilots has been evolving, largely driven by regulatory change and the need for the BGA to provide services directly to us as pilots, many of them online.

In days past, the BGA served the clubs, but provided relatively few direct pilot services covering badges, records, etc. The gliding 'licence' was a self-styled affair, with variable recognition outside the UK, when EASA began bringing EU law to general aviation.

These days, the BGA acts as a qualified entity for CAA-issued licences, holds EASA and national airworthiness approvals, provides the organisational support for glider airworthiness and the inspector community, and manages the training system with support for training standards, pilot and instructor certification, procedures and courses. All of which is appropriately insured. It provides the clubs with the supporting Safety Management System, oversees non-fatal accident investigation work, and collates data and findings providing input and recommendations to improve safety across the gliding community. It also delivers competition systems, handles sales of introductory flights, and supports clubs in areas such as development, planning, grants, child protection, etc. Did I mention representation on airspace matters? Representation on medical matters, airworthiness, licensing, training, aerodrome standards, and so on? Not to mention publishing *Sailplane* and *Gliding* magazine. All this with just seven full time staff equivalents. With apologies to Monty Python - well, what did the Romans do for us?

Of course, the majority of the activities detailed above are delivered by volunteers. The BGA governance structure is almost exclusively volunteer-led from the Executive Committee through to the hard working committee members delivering the everyday stuff we enjoy and rely upon so much for our operations. The clubs themselves are invariably volunteer run: everything from launching, cutting the grass, doing the accounts and cleaning the loos.

Given the increased requirements when operating a club these days that cover everything from child protection, insurance, health and safety, to fire checks, PAT testing etc, it's highly likely that our sport relies upon volunteer input more than ever before.

Most volunteer work is unsung, people giving so freely of their time and expertise. Whilst we rightly celebrate many notable individuals with our annual awards, the fact is the vast majority remain unsung heroes, keeping the wheels on the collective BGA wagon. It's a poor analogy, but I hope you get my meaning.

Hugh Browning, our highly respected statistics guru, tells us that the average glider pilot's age increases by 6 months every year. Modern family pressures, competition for leisure time, financial pressures and changing demographics all contribute.

BGA finances remain largely as expected. The Exec puts a budget to the membership during the AGM at the start of each year to cover the financial year commencing the following October through to the September after that – some 18 months after AGM approval/acceptance. Whilst our financial assumptions continue as expected, that's fine, but changes come in thick and fast these days, requiring response, invariably with a financial aspect. With future calls on our finances to support airspace work, some exciting new club marketing initiatives led by Dave Latimer, and ongoing development of our core IT/website delivery systems, plus absorbing any changes due to EASA requirements, it's clear that balancing the books, whilst keeping fees as low as possible will remain a focus. Fortunately we have expert input from our accounts manager Peter Bishop, supported by our treasurer Tony Smith, providing accurate and timely data to model the financial impacts.

Communicating all this activity is essential and I'm heartened by the ever-increasing focus and attendance at both the main BGA conference in February/March and the autumn club management conference. Both have a different focus and approach, but both are gaining momentum in their own way, reflecting increasing demand to exchange information and learn from best practice within the clubs. One might consider the club management conference to be

the result of a collective desire to improve productivity within the increasingly challenged, cash-strapped, time-poor, volunteer-led community we find ourselves in. The Exec, too, has taken this need on board, looking at ways we might take a more strategic approach to reduce or optimise workloads into the future in order to be more effective. A simple example is challenging the multiple airspace grabs going on inexorably across the country, driven within a dreadfully unfair airspace change process. If we'd challenged the process years ago, perhaps the airspace workload could have been mitigated. Perhaps the outcomes might have been fairer. What if we looked at other systemic issues - environmental, governance, relationships (sister organisations, regulators, etc), financial, marketing, service delivery, etc - in the same way? George Metcalfe is leading this ongoing initiative for us.

St Exupery, has a lovely quote: "If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea."

It's my belief that the BGA works to this sentiment better than any other organisation I've had the pleasure to work with. Too much control and we stifle innovation, too little governance and we lose the collective power. We'll try and keep it in the goldilocks zone.

St Exupery was famous as an aviator, yet his best quote was about sailing! I'm still looking for the endless immensity of a soaring sky, but after a long, wet British winter, hopefully we can look forward to a long, dry British summer, especially with the European Championships coming to Lasham in August. Should be fun!

Safe landings.

**Peter Harvey**  
Chairman

## Chief Executive's Report

I always find it interesting to reflect on the previous 12 months of BGA activity. Turning that reflection into something others may find interesting is another thing altogether!

Gliding is an adventurous sport within which we are committed to safe practices with the objective of ensuring that third parties are not harmed and to facilitating a sport gliding environment where the levels of risk are as low as reasonably practicable. There is no room for complacency. You can read more about our ongoing proactive approach to managing flying risks in the Safety Committee report.

To a large extent, it has been business as usual for the BGA during 2016. By that, I refer of course to the huge amount of ongoing, diverse, direct and indirect support to clubs and pilots provided by volunteers, staff and contractors. You can read about the BGA's financial performance elsewhere in this report. Our external engagement on behalf of gliding both within the UK and further afield continued apace during 2016, working with government and regulators, with other air sport organisations within the Royal Aero Club and the GA Alliance and, of course, other gliding interests within the European Gliding Union.

As you would expect, the various BGA committees and other working groups have been very busy in their particular areas of expertise. These much appreciated expert volunteer groups are given the space to develop in a way that matches the current need and to fit the available experience. During 2016, the Development Committee under Dave Latimer has additionally taken on a proactive role with strategically important developments around marketing which all clubs are starting to hear about. Among a broad church of other issues, the Competitions Committee chaired by Liz Sparrow is working on improving the competition experience for competitors and host clubs alike. Don Irving, who chaired the Instructors Committee for many years, stepped down in December to be replaced by Colin Sword. Don's support has been invaluable during the years of planning our way forward on a number of training topics. Colin Sword, Mike Fox and others are turning their attention to further evolving the BGA instructor course to better meet the needs of candidates. You can read in detail about all the committees' activities elsewhere in this report.

Associated with both the CAA and EASA's relatively new risk-based approach to the regulation of GA, the UK, along with many other European countries, has temporarily opted out of EASA pilot licensing, training and operations rules that would otherwise apply to gliding. We are actively engaged with EASA and the helpful work led by the EGU that aims to establish specific simplified, risk-based rules for sailplanes. This work will continue for at least the next two years. You can read about the detail in [Sailplane and Gliding](#) magazine. Meanwhile, with one eye on the ANO, gliding in the UK continues under the BGA's self-regulated requirements, including the BGA gliding certificate and all BGA instructor ratings while, at the same time, those who choose to hold EASA licences are appropriately supported.

We routinely engage with the CAA in two distinct areas, but with two very different experiences. Our work with the CAA GA Unit is invariably productive and satisfactory; the gliding community's experienced, responsible, and self-regulating approach is valued. Equally, the informed, compliant and pragmatic approach demonstrated by the GA Unit is most welcome. Conversely, we are finding engagement with CAA on airspace matters to be increasingly unsatisfactory. It is clear that we are all trying to operate within outdated and inflexible airspace constructs and rules that hamper a reasonable approach to managing airspace that meets the needs of all users. It is deeply worrying that, too frequently, the CAA's airspace-related decisions that affect us suggest almost no notice is taken of our carefully considered inputs. Commercial interests are important, but not above all else and particularly where speculative ACPs are concerned. How we establish a much needed new approach going forward is not yet obvious. Meanwhile, we are considering how to acquire some professional support for all our volunteer airspace experts who are regularly battling with the detail on our behalf, as well as engaging with politicians on this strategically important topic.

Those who have attended various BGA conferences and seminars in the past months will be aware that we are turning our sights towards the next 10-20 years and specifically what sort of BGA will be needed to provide the support and services that clubs believe they and gliding may require. George Metcalfe, an Executive



Committee member, is leading this work which resulted in a scoping and consultation phase in 2016. Over the coming months further testing and discussion will develop into a strategic plan that will guide our future work across a wide spectrum of activity.

We were hugely saddened during the summer of 2016 to lose a friend and colleague, Kay Draper. Our sense of loss deepened in December with the shock of losing two more experienced glider pilot friends and colleagues, Chris Armstrong and Matt Wright. Our thoughts are with all friends and family. In due course, the AAIB investigations will highlight any lessons we can learn from these tragic events.

Gliding is all about people. Of course it isn't possible in this short piece to do justice to the massive amount of work by volunteers, contractors and staff across the entire association. The annual awards presented at the BGA conference and elsewhere give us all a modest opportunity to recognise contributions made. I'd like to give my sincere thanks to everyone who supports our fantastic sport.

Finally, please don't forget to arrange to visit Lasham or at least watch the action online during the European Gliding Championships in August. That event, directed by British Gliding Team pilot and multi-Gold medal winner, Andy Davis MBE, promises to be one of the year's significant gliding highlights.

Have fun and stay safe during 2017.

**Pete Stratten**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

## Treasurer's Report

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I would like to begin this report by expressing my gratitude to Leslie Kaye, my predecessor, for his stewardship as BGA Treasurer for a number of years.

During the year to 30 September 2016, there was a surplus on ordinary activities before taxation of £32,255 compared to a comparable surplus last year of £14,787. This has largely been as a result of strong cost control and some underspend against budgeted items.

The statutory accounts for the year include what appears at first sight to be a tax refund of £21,517. An explanation may be helpful. In 2014 it was cautiously considered that the BGA may have a historic corporation tax liability in the region of £20,000. This was provided for in the annual financial accounts to 30 September 2014. Following detailed work by our accounts manager and a professional tax advisor, the position has been formally clarified with HMRC. There is in fact no material tax liability. The provision that was made in the accounts to 30 September 2014 has therefore now been 'released' back to the 30 September 2016 income and expenditure account. The provision and release was an accounting transaction and no cash left the BGA.

BGA 'Discover Gliding' and 'Go for Gliding' mini-course voucher sales continue to perform well following the new website launch, with the corresponding redemptions to clubs showing significant year on year growth; in 2014 the total redemption to clubs was £25k, in 2015 it was £41k and in 2016 it was £62k.

It can be a challenging exercise to prepare accurate budgets for periods that are nearly two years away. As a general principle, our normal, or 'business as usual' costs are relatively predictable and we can forecast these with some degree of accuracy. Contingencies are obviously far less exact and the Executive Committee has the flexibility to respond to those as necessary and after consultation with clubs. The budget for 2017/2018 that will be presented at the 2017 BGA AGM deliberately avoids rough estimates. It includes a full member fee increase of 50p and is expected to return a deficit on the year to in-part balance previous surpluses.

The Executive Committee has considered and agreed the need to encourage an overall reduction in the cost of training as an Assistant Instructor. Therefore, it has been decided that with immediate effect the two weekend A and C instructor course modules will be provided with no BGA fee. The (5-7 day) D module fee will remain at £315. This reduces the fee paid to the BGA by candidates from £515 to £315 (even lower for those under age 21). Any impact on the overall budget is outweighed by the benefit to potential instructors and their clubs.

I would like to thank you for your continued support and look forward to working with you in the coming year.

**Anthony Smith**  
BGA Treasurer

Looking back on the year that is now behind us I'm shocked to realise that this is my sixth report. I'm also struck by continually recurring themes.

Each year I've reported on excellent work from overworked volunteers making our case in a logical, evidence based and responsible manner when faced with airport sponsors seeking more and more controlled airspace. Too often those sponsors seem to have looked only at their own ambitions before proposing additional CAS and spending large sums of shareholder or public money on consultants who produce lengthy reports. By the time formal consultation processes begin there is little enthusiasm to rethink or significantly amend their proposals. That attitude is likely encouraged by the track record of CAA decisions which have overwhelmingly just approved sponsors' requests despite well-expressed concerns and opposition from gliding and GA.

Airspace is of course a precious and limited national resource and we understand that we will not always get the outcome that best suits us. What we do need is a process where the various airspace users can work collectively to reach a common understanding of any "problem" before any one party becomes wedded to a "solution" of their choice and uses the airspace change process to bulldoze *their solution* through the system. In 2016 we responded to a consultation on how the existing process might be improved, and now see some hope for a better process in future. Few things can be more important to us than seeing real change in this area. Without it, we appear to be condemned to continue making huge efforts to respond to proposals whose sponsors care more about getting CAS than defining, quantifying and solving problems, hoping that our input is acted on by the proposer, and wishing that the regulator's decision makers do not just automatically approve changes.

The list of recent and ongoing airspace issues is neither short nor trivial and I note here only a selected few:-

- We await decisions on Farnborough and Inverness.
- We have seen a decision to award Class D airspace at Belfast. While not of uppermost operational impact to us we are deeply concerned that the changes were brought about for bureaucratic reasons only and were implemented as an alternative to an acknowledged need to review and modernize inappropriate airspace.
- We have seen leakage of what appears to be covert approval of an RMZ at Hawarden, an operation which has no bookable commercial passenger flights - a decision which could surely create a precedent for a nationwide landslide of similarly unwelcome applications.
- At last year's BGA conference we were told of CAA intent to substantially reduce CAS at Doncaster and Teeside. We still await results and the long overdue Post Implementation Review at Doncaster, also Southend.
- We expect new applications for CAS at Leeds Bradford, Brize, Oxford and Exeter.
- As announced at last year's conference we did see a reduction in restrictions around nuclear sites and are grateful to see that come to pass.

I am again indebted to the very many volunteers within and outwith the airspace committee; without them our work would not be possible.

**John Williams**  
Chairman, Airspace Committee

## Competitions and Awards Committee

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The Competitions and Awards Committee has a broad remit – we are responsible for promoting all forms of competition gliding and for policy and management of UK and international competition matters including ratings lists, competition bids, nationals entries and British team selection and funding. Mark Holden retired from the committee during the year and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank him for his contribution.

As I write, the second 2016 World Championship event - for the flapped classes - is about to start at Benalla, Australia where we hope to add to the World 20m bronze medal brought home from Lithuania by Steve and Howard Jones. Also in Lithuania, Jez Hood came 9th in the Standard class with our other team pilots further down the rankings this time. The Comps Committee is continuing its efforts to come up with a sustainable approach to coaching, management and funding to support the British Team.

The UK Nationals season got off to a rather sorry start with the weather giving us just one racing day for the Club Class at Pocklington; it was much the same for the Standards and 20m at Aston Down - although the Standards made the most of an 'interesting' bit of weather to manage 2 competition days. Congratulations to national champions Derrick Roddie, George Metcalfe and Andy Davis for making the most of those opportunities. Lashamglide, Lasham's pre-Europeans, hosted the 15m and Open Nationals and had a much better week with 7 competition days – and, with overseas pilots ensuring hot competition, well done to national champions Leigh Wells and Peter Harvey. At Tibenham, the 18m Nationals was won by Brian Birlison while Dan Smallbone triumphed at the Juniors. The Comps Committee continues to work with competition organisers to make it easier to deliver better competitions and so

help turn around the drop in numbers of pilots competing in rated competitions. We are developing an 'Ideal Comp' model to help organisers offer the full range of things that make for a great competition and are looking at how we can provide some freely available 'plumbing' to help make competition administration simpler.

But we don't forget that 'other types of competitive flying' are available, and so it's congratulations to Ed Downham who has climbed to the very top rung of the National Ladder. Well done also to Interclub League Champions, The Gliding Centre (Husbands Bosworth). After a bit of a hiccup with a late change of venue for the Interclub League final in 2016, the focus is firmly on how we can make it easier for clubs and pilots to take part - we hope to involve as many of the ICL organisers and participants as possible in this. I'll finish with a thumbs up to everyone who took part in any sort of competition - rated, Enterprise, inter-club, task weeks and all - or posted a flight on the BGA Ladder.

Our desire is to increase competitive cross-country flying by making it easy for clubs to provide a fun, safe and challenging environment which encourages people to take part in, and improve their skills to move up through, different levels of competition. Here's to some great racing in 2017!

#### **Liz Sparrow**

Chair, Competitions & Awards Committee

Committee: Alan Langlands (vice chair); Brian Spreckley; Russell Cheetham; Paul Crabb; Richard Hood; Andy Cockerell; Iain Baker; Andrew Mugleston; Jon Gatfield; Justin Craig  
British Team Manager – Graham Garnett.



The Development Committee has started to look more to the future now that time-hungry but essential reactive issues like the changes to Community Amateur Sports Club legislation are behind us. We have started gathering data to inform ourselves and clubs about how we can better promote our sport and improve service to both prospective and current pilots. Our aim is to improve the general understanding of our sport amongst the public at large and to improve recruitment and retention of members thus increasing the overall levels of participation. Clearly this will need to be balanced against club capacity.

We have also started to form regional groups of clubs to consider regional issues such as site security, airspace and any other issues where perhaps resources can be shared. The first of these groups, the Thames Valley Group, has met and we plan further similar meetings in 2017.

There was some final sweeping-up to do with CASC. Eleven clubs needed some detailed support to ensure they were compliant with the new rules which came into force on 31st March 2016. We also continued to attend the HMRC CASC Forum meetings alongside other sport National Governing Bodies and the Sports and Recreation Alliance (S&RA). We supported several clubs with planning issues and continue to provide support on Safeguarding to ensure the young are safe at our clubs.

We responded to consultations on Welsh Outdoor Recreation, the Government's Sport Strategy, Sport England's strategy and on a Charter for Sports Governance. The outcome of these later consultations has signalled a significant change in approach with more funding to be targeted to get the inactive into sport rather than supporting the already active.

On the topic of funding, we held a workshop that was attended by thirteen people from seven clubs. We supported ten clubs with funding applications of which four were successful. Generally

funding has been difficult with the suspension of many of the Sport England funds, such as Inspired Facilities, pending the result of their Strategic Review. We will be looking at how we can align club development plans and future funding applications with the new Government Strategy.

A lot of hard work went into the planning of the 2016 Club Management Conference which this year was held in November at a new venue. The conference was a great success with the biggest attendance we have ever seen partly because of the welcome addition of a Junior Conference. Overall we had more than 200 attendees from 56 clubs with these clubs representing almost 80% of the UK membership. It is fantastic to have this opportunity to engage with clubs, share ideas and good practice. A big thank you to everyone who helped set up the conference, to presenters and all attendees.

Towards the end of the year clubs were once again confronted with possible changes to their rates. We re-formed the Rates Working Group which has already provided valuable feedback and advice to a number of clubs. The Group has also met with the Valuation Office Agency and so far this dialogue appears to be positive and helpful.

As ever I would like to thank the other members of the Development Committee for their help and support. Moreover, we should all thank the many volunteers in the clubs who devote probably more time and effort than many realise to keep our sport safe, fun and affordable.

**Dave Latimer**  
Chairman, Development Committee

The Flight Operations Committee has continued dealing with a variety of issues at the request of the BGA. These can be dealt with by small working groups or by individuals who use their knowledge, skills and experience to advise the movement or bring pressure to bear on the aviation authorities.

Airspace remains a serious concern. Whilst the BGA Airspace Committee deals with proposed airspace changes, the FOC represents the BGA at CAA meetings on how we can reduce the number of airspace incursions. There is concern that, despite the efforts of all those involved, including all the air sports associations, we do not appear to be making much progress. The worry is that gliding may be caught up in a wave of increased legislation when we are not the perpetrators of airspace busts. One of the primary subjects in the 2016 winter presentations by the General Aviation Safety Committee (GASCo) has been airspace incursions.

The BGA is heavily engaged in the CAA's conspicuity working group and efforts to coordinate the different equipment are ongoing. Many air traffic units have access to applications such as Flight Radar 24 and Spot the Glider. Although they cannot use them to provide an air traffic service they are able to get some idea of where gliders are and what they are doing.

Working with the Aeronautical Information Service we have seen a reduction in non-significant NOTAMs and, when identified, the removal of unnecessary NOTAMs. There is a continuous debate on the content of our aeronautical charts. Trying to accommodate the whole spectrum of the aviation community will always be a challenge. It is accepted that more and more pilots will be using electronic information systems; however the CAA is unable to monitor

the quality of the information presented by third-party systems. We have to ask "what is one going to do in the event of a system failure?"

We are represented on the Airprox board where our advice and opinions are always welcome. In 2017 the BGA will be looking at how clubs can improve the availability of information about when they are active and how pilots can contact them. We have been encouraging glider pilots to talk to air traffic units on cross-country flights; we need to do the same for GA pilots near gliding sites.

If we are asking our pilots to use the radio more, we do need to improve our RT training. Our own gliding frequencies are unregulated and we need to be careful that when we do use air traffic frequencies we use them correctly. The current CAA RT licence is a bit over the top for glider pilots but it does provide a sound basis to start from. It is better to learn the basics correctly rather than having to relearn things at a later date. The problem for glider pilots is the limited opportunity to use the radio in an ATC environment.

Like many organisations, the CAA is under budget constraints and at times key personnel are not available. Short notice changes or cancellations of meetings can make things difficult especially for the general aviation community who rely heavily on volunteers giving up their free time. The worry is that changes can be rushed through without full considerations of the issues.

**Peter Moorehead**  
Chairman, Flight Operations Committee

Mike Fox and his team of 6 BGA Instructor Coaches have continued to provide key elements of our instructor courses on a regional basis. The apparent workload associated with the modular course has been the subject of some ongoing criticism. However, a simple comparison with the previous and the revised modular course shows that the total effort required is little changed. Notwithstanding that, more effort will be directed to helping our club FICs during the coming year. A review of the content and provision of instructor training is being carried out, and this will dictate the conduct of a trial in 2017.

As the modular system operates on a rolling basis, it's harder to see how many instructors were trained. However, in the last 12 months, 27 instructors completed their D module and started instructing at the Assistant rating standard.

A number of FIC seminars were organised on a regional basis by SREs. The content of these seminars is due to be reviewed with a view to further supporting the club senior instructors who deliver the B module of the current instructor training.

The regional examining teams continue to support CFIs and their clubs.

At the end of 2015, the BGA was granted an Approved Training Organisation Approval (ATO). This ATO allows the BGA to provide the necessary seminars for our instructors holding EASA FI(S) ratings and for our examiners holding EASA FE(S) and FIE(S) authorisations. Under Mike Fox's leadership a number of two day FI(S) seminars have been held. As these seminars have been well received, places on future seminars will be offered to non-EASA licence holders on a space-available basis.

During the coming year a number of EASA examiners will be revalidated via our ATO.

As the implementation of EASA Part-FCL, as it applies to gliding, continues to be delayed, the development of any further changes in training standards to meet possible regulatory requirements is effectively on hold.

Mike Fox and Don Irving made a visit to the French national gliding centre at Saint Auban during September. They were able to observe both the differences and similarities in approach to instructor training. The two key messages that they took away were: a) the extensive use of a simulator during the initial ground school week to establish the teaching principals; and b) the emphasis on teaching soaring almost exclusively during the final part of the course. If there was one simple observation coming out of the visit for the BGA, it was the woeful lack of use of simulators within our overall training system at all levels – a simple but very effective tool for beating our wonderful British weather whilst driving down costs and improving the overall standard of learning!

In closing, I would like to thank all the members of the Instructors' Committee, the many regional team members and all club Flight Instructor Coaches and CFIs for their continuing support.

**Don Irving**  
Chairman, Instructors' Committee

Whilst attending the BGA Club Management Conference at the end of 2016, it was heartening to find that most clubs have now placed a significant focus on recruiting young pilots. Faced with the reality of an ageing population, many of these clubs have been proactive and identified unique ways of increasing their Junior membership. Whether this is through funding, cadet schemes, increased use of social media or changing attitudes, each club is finding a way that works best for them.

The Junior Development Group is always available to support club endeavours to increase Junior participation. We have great experience in understanding what matters to young, aspiring pilots and how best a club could engage with them. My presentation at the Club Management Conference centred on understanding the life-cycle of a Junior pilot - that within the "Junior" bracket you have a small age range which produces different levels of confidence, distractions, enthusiasm and financial ability to name but a few. As such, there is no "one size fits all" solution to Junior recruitment and retention; it requires an analysis of how the club can tailor itself to suit. The clubs which have adapted to this concept are beginning to reap the benefits from a revitalised membership, with Juniors now fulfilling many committee / instructor / inspector positions.

As always, my colleagues have summarised the various activities which have been undertaken.

### **Winter Series (Steve Pozerskis)**

In April, we returned to Nympsfield. 70+ people turned up with a weather forecast that would not have looked out of place in July! The Friday saw some gentle ridge lift and site checks; however, the following two days saw some very reasonable soaring conditions. On the Sunday, a number of people undertook (and completed) their first 300km and at least one Silver Distance flight was completed. As ever, thank you to Nympsfield and their members for hosting the weekend.

Moving on to the 2016/17 Series: we started in earnest with a trip up the M6 to Portmoak. We were greeted with ridge and wave flying on every day! Gliders were dragged up from all corners of the country with a Twin Astir from Easterton, a Libelle from Devon and an ASW15 from Rattlesden and everyone had a great time.

Roy Garden in his ASH25Mi had to land out at Dundee after he decided to launch through a gap in the clouds only for it to close in, but Emily (who was P2) got to see some stunning scenery and cloudscapes that otherwise would have been invisible from the ground. This type of enterprise is what the weekends are all about – making the most of whatever weather has been thrown at us!

As I write, we are gearing up for a trip to the Long Mynd in February. 60+ Juniors will be hoping for the ridge/wave to be favourable. This will be followed by a return to Nympsfield from 31st March to 2nd April.

As ever, we cannot undertake these weekends without the help of two-seater owners. We regularly have four or five private two-seaters made available to us at each event. We cannot thank the owners of these enough for this.

If you have any Juniors at your club who are bored of circuit bashing in the winter, please point them in our direction ([Facebook](#) or through the BGA Office). There is a very friendly atmosphere with a great mixture of pre-solo up to world champion pilots. The weekends act as an introduction to ridge and wave flying but also the Juniors get a brief insight into the competition world with morning briefings and a debrief in the evening, not to mention the chance to fly in high performance XC gliders.

### **Junior National Championship (Matt Davis)**

The 2016 Junior Nationals was held alongside the 18m Nationals at Norfolk Gliding Club at the end of August. Unfortunately the 2016 weather curse struck and the competition was decided by one day's racing. A good blue day was won by Dan Smallbone who led from the front for most of the day with a great individual performance. Even promptly swallowing a wasp during his victory drinks failed to take the shine off becoming Junior Champion! Details of the 2017 competition will be announced in due course - stay tuned to [UK Junior Gliding on Facebook](#).

The aforementioned poor weather made it tricky to pick a Junior Team to represent us at the Junior World Championships in Lithuania in 2017. Tom Arscott will be defending his Club Class title, flying alongside Jake Brattle. In the Standard Class we welcome Mike Gatfield back to the Team, with another newbie, Finn Sleigh, along-

side him. Training plans are falling into place with lots of overseas trips lined up. Spain, France, Germany and Slovakia are all being mentioned as potential places to look for some early season sun. Good luck to the team and remember to follow the British Gliding Team on [Facebook](#) or at [www.britishglidingteam.co.uk](http://www.britishglidingteam.co.uk)

### **Club Management Conference (Peter Hibbard)**

The first Junior Conference was held alongside the main Club Management Conference in 2016. Several clubs were represented and different problems were shared and each club spoke about their own solutions. Topics varied from the technical, such as ages for airfield tasks like driving or winching, to the theoretical - keeping young pilots motivated and focused. A lot of good solutions were found through the meeting and the Junior Development Team are looking to share this with a wider audience in the future.

In the afternoon it was the turn of junior pilots themselves to have a say in the running of things. Several key topics were raised and discussed and have given the Junior Development Team a great insight on where to focus in the coming year. The issue of image of gliding was discussed and this tied in well with the new BGA initiative being raised in the main conference. Also raised was the topic of junior events and the age and experience being catered for.

### **Summary and 2017 Outlook**

There are many other volunteers working on a variety of avenues, and I pass my thanks to each of them.

For the first time, we will have a UK Junior Gliding stand at the BGA Conference - please visit to share your ideas, and see where we may be able to assist. Please also encourage all Junior members of your club to come for the day. If nothing else, it is a great way to socialise and meet other young pilots. We have found from experience that the sooner a junior pilot makes friends within gliding, the greater the chances of them being retained longer term.

We are on a positive trend at the moment and, with the number of 14 year olds having soloed in the last couple of years, we are expecting there to be a surge of entries to the Junior Nationals. It's an exciting time, and we hope that all clubs share this feeling towards encouraging younger people into the sport.

### **Charlie Jordan**

Junior Gliding Development Team



During 2016 there were no accidents or serious incidents arising from medical causes. There were relatively few medical queries raised and this is due to the simplification of procedures by which driving licences are accepted, replacing the general practitioner endorsement of solo pilots required by the NPPL. A GP endorsement is still required for instructors and those authorised to carry passengers. Sadly the aeromedical problem in general aviation is that a few irresponsible pilots fail to declare known disease and the BGA has found that the knowledge of a pilot by their GP is a better control than expertise in aeromedicine. Once a medical problem is identified, it can usually be managed.

During the year there were 52 file items logged, a further reduction on previous years; some pilots have adopted EASA licences, but others who become less fit can now decide for themselves to revert to a restricted medical status for which a driving licence is sufficient. The largest source (15) of queries was from pilots, prospective pilots or their parents. Largely arising from the change of regulation, the second source was clubs (11) and the BGA office (6). Only 3 queries came from General Practitioners with 1 from a consultant. The remainder were from the CAA, the AAIB, FAI and other associations.

Of the items logged, many concerned general policy with the remainder being about personal medical issues. Classification of the latter by diagnostic group were led by cardiovascular and neurological with six each, one of the latter being a head injury. Next was psychiatric (4) with metabolic (3). Then there were one case each of neoplasms, pregnancy, renal disease and orthopaedic. Of less fit pilots, the recommended disposal was restricted in 15 cases, some of which were temporary, two with safety pilot; no pilots were grounded.

During the year the CAA published ANO 2016 which followed CAP 1397. To our surprise the ANO excluded from a simple declaration any person who had ever received 'medical or surgical treatment'. The BMAA, supported by the BGA and other associations protested and the ANO was subsequently amended to a simpler version only excluding those under treatment for psychiatric disease or flying aircraft over two tonnes AUW.

The BGA explained to the CAA that it was not fully content with the proposals in CAP 1397 and had decided not to adopt them for gliding. Duplicate recording increases bureaucracy, creates issues as to responsibility, but does not add to safety. With the private driving licence as a standard for solo flight or with another pilot, administration at club level is adequate and more sensitive to problems. However the BGA has a duty of care where inexperienced persons are carried as passengers or pupils and has retained the DVLA 2 driving standard with GP endorsement for such pilots.

National and international representation remains important; Peter Saundby remains the Royal Aero Club delegate to CIMP which this year was held in Lausanne. At that meeting several other National Aero Clubs expressed dissatisfaction with EASA medical policies. Steve Gibson with Frank Voeten represents the BGA at the CAA Medical Fora and also supports Europe Air Sports.

**Drs Peter Saundby, Steve Gibson & Frank Voeten**  
BGA Medical Advisers

2016 has been another busy year for the Safety Committee working with the BGA SMS and an agreed set of priorities in support of clubs and their members.

Stall/Spin. We have made first steps towards addressing stall/spin accidents. All serious stall/spin accidents from 1976 to 2015 have been reviewed and generic circumstances and pilot characteristics have been identified. Recognising that the 'Fly the Glider' rhetoric is not working, the Safety Committee has recommended early mitigating action to reduce pilot workload and potential distraction. Presentations have been made at the Club Management Conference, to the Instructors' Committee, and in the regional CFI presentations.

Accident and Incident Reports. Data analysis is very time consuming but vital work. Our healthy reporting culture continues. Of course, we'd rather an incident didn't occur, but if it does we like to know about it! All reports are monitored and appropriate action taken, including two BGA investigations by recently appointed volunteer BGA investigators. Thanks very much to everyone who has taken the time to complete and submit a report. Of course, every report involves a person and our thoughts are with anyone who has been affected by a gliding accident.

Safe Launching. We have continued to refresh and promote safe winching and safe aero-towing. Whilst winch launch accidents have significantly fallen in number over the past decade and remain at an all-time low, wing drop accidents during the winch launch ground roll remain too common. Wing drop accidents occur predominantly to experienced pilots. They usually happen as a result of not releasing the cable if the wing drops during the ground run. The message is a simple one – start the launch with your spare hand on the release and, if you can't keep the wings level before take-off, release before the wing touches the ground.

Communication. Safety briefings on aero-tow performance and field landing have been published. Airspace safety guidance has been

provided through CFIs. The safe aero-towing leaflet has been updated and reprinted, and a refreshed safe winching poster has been published. Following dialogue with clubs, the decision to rationalise recommended practices and various other risk management information has resulted in a significantly revised and updated BGA 'Managing Flying Risk' publication. An article on field landings written by leading pilots was published in the April/May edition of S&G. Associated guidance was supplied to pilots during competitions. We have stressed the priority for safe trial lessons/introductory flights at the Club Management Conference and in regional CFI presentations. The safety-critical role of the wing tip holder during winch launching has also been highlighted.

Other Activity. By invitation, Safety Committee members have helped a number of clubs at their sites including advising on club safety reviews and operating culture. A policy on avoiding late take-over was developed, agreed, and published to all instructors. We have engaged successfully with the CAA to establish the BGA incident and accident reporting system as compliant with European reporting requirements and, separately, with EASA in support of gliding-specific data and analysis issues. We are engaged with CAA-led mid-air conflict initiatives. Club Safety Officer seminars have been developed for delivery early in 2017 to enhance the Club Safety Officer contribution to their clubs.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Safety Committee colleagues Hugh Browning, Mike Fox, Tim Freegarde, John Hull, and Gordon MacDonald for all their valuable time, insight and commitment.

**Pete Stratten**  
Chairman, Safety Committee

EASA - European Regulation. Significant new developments to European airworthiness regulation were applied to general /sport aviation, including gliding, during 2016. Revisions to Part M were enacted in October invoking a 'Self Declared Maintenance Programme' for all sailplanes, motor-sailplanes and tugs. For powered aircraft this is already in operation. These rules will be fully implemented for sailplanes during the coming year, and will involve some changes in BGA airworthiness processes, highlighting the legal requirement on owners (individuals or clubs) to ensure the airworthiness of those airframes in their care. Our refresher seminars now contain a significant element of this re-education process.

Part M Light and CAO. Hard on the heels of this change will come the transition to 'Part M Light' - probably in 2018. The main purpose of this long-sought legislation is to provide a simplified and unified framework through which sport associations can manage their member communities, under a Combined Airworthiness Approval (CAO). The principal changes will be in the relationship between the BGA and UK CAA, but our inspector authorisations will become simpler, and the timing of maintenance and airworthiness reviews (ARC) will be re-united, as in the pre-EASA era. The BGA is working with the UK CAA to ensure that these concurrent changes can be accommodated in an effective and progressive manner.

Personal Licensing of Inspectors (Engineers). EASA advises that the EC Opinion on personal engineer licensing has been enacted but implementation dates remain unclear. For the present we might assume a two year implementation process over 2017 to 2019. This will involve a change in the relationship between the BGA and engineering operators, but we anticipate that currently approved BGA inspectors will be empowered under the new code. We remain deeply concerned that the requirements for qualification of new engineers will lead to a shortage of new candidates.

CS-STAN. The certification standard, CS-STAN, is being expanded, enabling a wide range of day-to-day repairs and modifications applicable to sailplanes, potentially from 2017. Many of these purely cover established practices, but others provide a firmer footing to necessary airworthiness operations.

BGA Support Activity. Our Chief Technical Officer, Gordon MacDonald has assumed an increasing role in education and refresher training and communication for the technical community. Our courses for Club Maintainers and refresher seminars in Annual renewal processes continue to be well received. Our regional RTOs continue to provide valued technical advice at the membership level over many aspects of the technical side of gliding. The BGA continues to be assisted by Keith Morgan in meeting our CAMO quality targets.

Gordon's review of airworthiness of ageing wooden airframes is now virtually complete. Through these inspections carried out entirely within the BGA, we have developed what we believe to be a world-leading understanding of the condition and needs of these airframes. Our approach to this issue is being keenly followed in several European states. Results demonstrate that there is no place for complacency, and a significant proportion of these airframes have either required significant attention or have been found to be beyond repair. Any individual or club who has concerns in this area should contact Gordon at the BGA office.

With the assistance of EGU and Europe Air Sports, the BGA is mounting a campaign to move future, lightweight sailplanes into closer alignment with other unregulated aircraft categories. This decision involves changes to EASA's Basic Regulation, so discussions remain slow moving.

**Howard A Torode**  
Chairman, Technical Committee

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