

British Gliding Association Annual Report 2020



The BGA is the governing body of sport gliding in the UK and a member organisation that exists to support the clubs and their members and glider owners. This 2020 annual report provides a snapshot of a very different year for everyone and provides some insight into the excellent work carried out by the sub-committees and others on behalf of us all.

Chairmans Report

The Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has had devastating effects on society and everyone within the British Gliding Association offers their thoughts to family and friends who have lost loved ones.

The pandemic showed us that despite the challenges that all have had to endure, the heart of gliding is fit and well. The community spirit and desire from all to help ensure fellow glider pilots remained part of the club and engaged with throughout the year was remarkable and heart-warming. The fact that all pulled together to keep their respective club going was a huge positive in what was otherwise a hugely difficult year and, as chairman, I give wholehearted thanks to all volunteers who have kept gliding safe and a going concern. A special mention goes to the Development Committee, and in particular David Howse, for helping clubs to weather the economic effects of the pandemic; thank you.

There were some great flights achieved in 2020. With at least 50 flights of over 750kms recorded on the ladder during the summer showing that, despite there being no official competitions held in 2020, cross country flying was enjoyed by many with glider pilots using skill and technology effectively to further the achievements possible through gliding. Although restrictions curtailed much flight training, a lot of online learning has occurred from the basics for new pilots through to instructor refreshers and training and numerous excellent webinars on a range of topics. As restrictions on freedom of movement reduce in 2021, it is hoped that the many new and low experienced pilots as well as new starters will have the opportunity to enjoy lots of flying.

The BGA strategy remains a key part of the future vision for gliding in the UK. In our 90th year, the 'Fit for Future' initiative was launched. The intent is to review BGA supplied and supported services to ensure they remain relevant and appropriate to the membership. 'Fit for Future' looks at all aspects of BGA operations and the wider engagement with existing and potential glider pilots. This has been very insightful already and it is hoped that the foundations laid over the coming year will help us to ensure gliding adapts, remains relevant and flourishes as we reach our centenary.

One event of great prestige is of course the opportunity to host the Women's World Gliding Championships in August 2022 (previously planned for 2021) at The Gliding Centre. The energy and enthusiasm towards this event and the opportunity to showcase the sport and aviation as a way of engaging more women in STEM subjects, and ultimately STEM careers, whilst highlighting the sustainability agenda is a once in a generation opportunity to make a difference. This opportunity, combined with the vibrant young pilot scene and the ongoing work with local communities to facilitate closer relationships that can help to build well-being in all age groups through gliding, means there are a lot of positives and a bright future for the sport. Wishing all a safe and significantly airborne 2021.

Andy Perkins
Chairman

CEOs Report

2020 started on a high note, with lots of newly qualified pilots preparing for the soaring year ahead. And then Covid-19 appeared - along with some of the best spring gliding weather we had seen for a long time. Limited flying resumed in the summer, with clubs and pilots responding extremely well under the circumstances. The November lockdown did not come as a surprise and of course this winter has again been very challenging for everyone. Throughout all these tumultuous changes, club committees have been working very hard to ensure that their businesses survive to emerge on the other side ready to go. We are grateful for support where it has been made available.

The rapid and widespread emergence of online platforms to facilitate meetings, socials, talks, briefings, and training has been extremely helpful and has probably resulted in a permanent shift in the way we do business. When a volunteer can attend a meeting without travelling, or a student pilot or instructor can engage with training without using limited weekend time, everyone wins. The other significant online interest has been simulated gliding. Once again, rapid learning from this activity has provided us with yet another set of tools that will continue to be useful in the future.

The Part-Sailplane Flight Crew Licensing (SFCL) and associated Declared Training Organisation (DTO) rules apply from 8th December 2021. Last year, we noted that 'if self-declaration alleviations to EASA medical rules we've proposed to the DfT can be accomplished, transition to licensing will be straightforward and undamaging'. The welcome change in law in January 2021 that allows SPL holders to utilise a medical declaration has the potential to keep lots of GA pilots in the air in the years to come if the CAA can proportionately resolve their sub-2000kg PMD policy issue that impacts sailplane and other pilots. During 2020, a BGA team of staff and expert volunteers has been developing the resources needed by clubs to support their instructors and student pilots going forward under the SFCL and DTO rules. As any new requirements and processes bed in, we continue to seek every opportunity to remove unnecessary barriers including complexity and cost. Ongoing mutual understanding, positive engagement, and effective communication with the CAA and the DfT remain essential.

As noted in the Chairman's report, work has started on the 'Fit for the Future' initiative, which is reviewing BGA services and support in terms of both quality and efficiency as well as to respond to future challenges and opportunities. We can expect this to be an extended and evolving piece of work that will result in adjustments following engagement and consultation with clubs.

You can read more about the BGA's financial performance in the Treasurers report below. Good financial control is vitally important, and I am grateful to both our Hon. Treasurer, our accounts manager, and the auditors for their diligence. I would like to express my thanks for the outstanding support from all our working group and committee members, Executive Committee, Vice-Presidents, and staff. We are very fortunate to have such high calibre, expert and motivated people representing our interests and supporting the continued success of gliding.

Pete Stratten
CEO

Treasurers Report

The financial results for the year to 30 September 2020 show a pre-tax surplus of £55k (2019 - £10k deficit). This is on a reduced turnover in the year, with a larger reduction in costs. There were several fluctuations in expected income and expenses, and of course, some of these were as a direct result of the pandemic. Whilst we generally expect to maintain a neutral corporation tax position, there is a small liability in the current year. This has largely been driven by the recognition as income of unredeemed trial lesson vouchers which has not been offset by the expenses incurred in the sale of new vouchers. The reduction in the sale of trial lesson vouchers is as a direct result of the pandemic.

Of course, 2020 brought us extraordinary challenges, both financial and non-financial, and I am pleased to say that the board dealt with these challenges whilst continuing to work towards our strategic objectives, which include greater participation, security of tenure for airfields and airspace challenges. After much consideration and discussion by the board, it was decided to provide a blanket three-month discount applied to each gliding club for each full flying member due to COVID-19 disruption. This is a one-off gesture to gliding clubs whilst at the same time recognising that the BGA needs to maintain a strong financial position to deal with future events and challenges. This discount will be reflected in the accounts of the BGA in the financial year 2020-2021.

We have prepared a budget for the financial year 2021 – 2022, in which we have not increased membership fees. We have also looked in detail at our expenditure to ensure we do not incur unnecessary expense, whilst at the same time ensuring the appropriate level of service and support is maintained. Our objective remains broadly to break even each year whilst maintaining a healthy balance sheet. This is to ensure that we are in a strong position to meet and deal with challenges and opportunities in the years ahead – some of these we know, others we do not.

As with previous years, we include items in the budget which we expect to be able to predict with some degree of certainty – this will always be something of an imprecise science when dealing with the future; we do not include items in the budget when we are entirely uncertain of the financial impact. Any unexpected expenditure is subject to robust board scrutiny before it is approved.

The healthy reserve figure on the balance sheet including a competition reserve puts the BGA in a strong position to deal with future challenges and opportunities. There will be some impact of the COVID-19 pandemic for some time, as well as other challenges and opportunities. For example, it is likely that introductory flying will be reduced for some time and we continue to monitor the situation and in particular the impact on clubs. The BGA maintains good financial discipline and we are constantly looking at opportunities to operate more efficiently. You can read elsewhere in this report about the 'Fit for the Future' initiative.

Finally, I would like to thank Peter Bishop and all the team for the continued diligent financial control at the BGA.

Tony Smith
Treasurer

Airspace Committee Report

As we often note, the price of our freedom to fly in open airspace is constant vigilance.

The CAA's airspace modernisation strategy (AMS) was launched prior to the Covid pandemic and subsequent collapse in commercial air transport activity. Most of the airports that are required to adjust their airspace to fit in with the AMS plan have had to step back from ACP work in the short term. Most will bounce back eventually. Meanwhile, the AMS is being redrafted. The CAA has recognised that GA has not previously been engaged in any meaningful way on AMS matters and is trying to address that; a series of 'listening' events took place during 2020. There is an emerging view outside the CAA that a 'clean sheet' approach is needed. The BGA will continue to work with the GA Alliance in making constructive inputs to CAA, NATS and others through engagement and consultation channels. We are also working with others to establish a better way of engaging effectively on all airspace matters. While the specific needs of different sectors of airborne activities must always be considered, the AMS is an important national project and it makes sense for recreational GA to be able to engage promptly and with a joined-up voice where needed.

Electronic conspicuity (EC) is a key enabler for lower airspace modernisation including reduced segregation. The BGA view on EC linked to practical lookout guidance [is published on our website](#). Through 2020, the DfT has supplied funding delivered via the CAA to support voluntary equipage of GA and UAS aircraft with EC devices. Interoperability via ground-based re-broadcasting is growing. Ultimately, a single technology will emerge that not only supports drone integration but also gives equipped aircraft access to airspace. Lots of effort is being made to ensure that the eventual equipage cost is balanced by real benefits. As we have reported previously, NATS (the UK's biggest provider of air traffic services) currently have no plans to deploy ADS-B overland. Meanwhile, equipping with any EC is better than none, with FLARM the obvious primary option for gliding operations as its specific design and conflict algorithms are proven effective in helping to support effective lookout and thus mitigate our greatest mid-air conflict risk, ie other gliders, TMGs and tugs.

Drones (or Unmanned Airborne Systems) are the new kid on the block - and here to stay. Inevitably, that has resulted in new regulations for that sector of aviation. There is an enormous amount of public funding being fed into drone development, plenty of people keen to make use of it, and as a result, there is an element of ambition exceeding experience that affects us when Temporary Danger Areas pop all over the country for test, trial and sales purposes. But there are positives. The TDA sponsors are required to engage through a slimmed down CAP1616 process, and with the GA Alliance we are helping them understand their obligations as well as educate them about recreational GA operations. We are also supportive of work to trial EC zones that could integrate drone and other activity through sense and avoid thus negating the need for TDAs. The longer-term airspace situation is unclear, but with drone industry organisations like the 'Airspace of the Future' consortium forming, there's little doubt change is coming and our engagement on airspace matters will continue to evolve.

It has been great to see club airspace reps getting more involved working with the airspace committee and in some cases other groups of stakeholders to respond effectively to local challenges. As ever, early engagement on fundamental issues before airspace designers start the expensive clock ticking is important and a benefit of the CAP1616 process. Had a similar process have been required of the ACPs taken forward under CAP725 in recent years, they may have been far less fractious, less time consuming and less expensive to respond to. We often look with interest at the way these things are handled elsewhere in Europe, where a quantitative safety case is an established part of a regular process of airspace review and change. It could be too easy to become numbed or overwhelmed with ACP response work. However, it is important that we

notice and understand potential airspace changes and then, if required, take appropriate action. You will be familiar with the outcome of the Brize Norton and Oxford airport CAP725 ACPs, which clearly demonstrate the importance of spotting the risk and getting involved to do something about it. Doing something in those cases occupied a large team of volunteers giving many months of effort, and gliding stakeholder involvement was pivotal.

To a large extent, much of the airspace committee work during 2021 will be associated with a re-emerging AMS, influencing that strategy, responding to the associated ACPs, and the plethora of airspace tweaks and changes brought about by an ever-changing aviation industry in a difficult economic environment. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Brian Burlison, Chris Thirkell, Colin Watt, John Williams, Mike Thorne, Mark Davenport, Nick Norman, Peter Moorehead, Phil King, Steve Noujaim, Andy Roch, Tom Hardie, and Tony Clarke for their ongoing efforts, knowledge, guidance and wise counsel. I would also like to thank Paul Ruskin and Andrew Watson for their initiative and dedication in successfully establishing proportionate FRTOL training for glider pilots.

The aim of all this work is of course to help maintain safe UK airspace and to ensure we and the next generation of glider pilots can enjoy our fantastic sport. We all have a part to play. Please prepare carefully before flight, be vigilant when flying, and, where requested, please give your support to protect our freedoms to fly.

Pete Stratten
Acting Chair

Competitions and Awards Committee Report

The pandemic hit competitions hard in 2020. With events spread throughout the year and Government guidance changing as the pandemic evolved, our policy was to remove barriers in the rules, where possible, and let each club make its own decision whether to go ahead with its competition. We held a Zoom session in June to help organisers share ideas and understand the issues. In the event, no rated competitions were able to go ahead, though a few clubs did manage to hold contests later in the year, notably the Mountain Soaring Competition at Aboyne and the Red Kite regionals held at Chiltern Park which were both successful due to some very inventive Covid-safe measures.

The Inter-Club League suffered too, with little or no activity due to Covid restrictions. It is hoped that Inter-Club activity can be restarted in 2021 with club events taking place as they become possible and a final late in the year.

The Womens' World Championships in January in Australia proved to be the only outing for any British Team in 2020. Liz Sparrow, Ayala Truelove and Cloudie Hill took the Silver Team Medal and Ayala won Bronze in standard class, but the whole competition was marred by a now infamous scandal involving the alleged illicit use of tracking data by the Australian team which resulted in multiple protests, a whole team penalty for the Australians and competing appeals from Australia on the one hand and the UK and Germany on the other. This issue occupied the Team captain and the Committee (among others) for weeks on end in the spring and beyond and remains unresolved even now.

Apart from that, 2020 was very sparse for the British Team. The planned Easter training event was cancelled and fantastic weather that weekend only made it worse.

A squad of Juniors managed to get to Issoudun for a week's training with some inspiring coaches giving up their time to help them prepare for upcoming Junior events.

One International competition that did take place was the Montlucon International in France in August. The standard was high with multiple former and current World Champions competing from all over Europe. A drought meant that no water ballast was allowed so it was a much more light-hearted event than normal. Five days were flown out of a possible seven and the Team acquitted themselves well. In all an excellent training event. Under the guidance of Women's' Team Captain, Jeremy Pack, a squad has been formed to train for the upcoming Women's World Championships at Husbands Bosworth in 2022. Despite pandemic restrictions the squad managed to get some flying in during 2020, often launching from their own clubs and debriefing on-line afterwards. We wish them better flying in 2021 and success in 2022.

We are pleased to report the launch of the Two-Seater Ladder for 2021. Cross-country flights by two seaters, where the P2 is a novice, will qualify. A unique feature of this new ladder is that the flights will be credited against the club, not the crew. It is hoped that this will encourage more opportunities for younger pilots to experience cross-country flying and bring the competitive spur of club rivalry into the mix.

Funding has been a major theme of the Committee's discussions this year. Most of our expenditure goes to supporting the British Team at international events and in support of the Junior Nationals. We would also like to be able to help out at the Inter-Club and Regionals level where costs may be a barrier to participation, but don't yet do so. Unfortunately, the cost of participating at international level keep increasing. World Championships are coming up in Australia and the USA in 2023 and 2024 where travel and glider transport add to the bill, so we face a drain on our reserves which will have to be addressed. A radical review of funding policy is under way for implementation from 2022.

We often hear that competition rules are over-complicated, discouraging clubs from organising competitions and pilots from entering them. The rules do place a high premium on scrupulous fairness and the elimination of luck and do so quite cleverly, but admittedly at the cost of complexity. We need to retain similarity to the IGC rules used for Internationals for our own National Championships, but we feel the time has come to relax the rules at Regionals level in the hope that making competitions easier to organise and understand will boost grass-roots participation. During 2020, a sub-committee of the Competitions and Awards committee was formed, with the task of recommending a set of simplified rules; for consultation in 2021 and application in Regionals from 2022.

I would like to end by thanking all of the members of the Committee for their hard work and to wish you all a happy return to competition flying in 2021 and beyond.

Alan Langlands
Chair

Development Committee Report

A good year for the Development Committee with lots of support work in response to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. In late 2019/early 2020 we completed a review of all English clubs with respect to their SASP status. A SASP is a Sport England Significant Area for Sport. This provides an extra layer of protection as any planning application that potentially affects a SASP must be reviewed by Sport England. An extra eight sites became SASPs and some sites were upgraded from Regional SASP to National SASP. See table for full details.

National SASP	Current SASP status or a new SASP	Regional SASP	Current SASP status or a new SASP
Bicester (Oxfordshire)	New SASP	Challock (Kent)	New SASP
Camphill (Derbyshire)	New SASP	Currock Hill (Northumberland)	New SASP
North Hill (Devon)	New SASP	Kirton-in-Lindsey (Lincolnshire)	New SASP
Aston Down (Gloucestershire)	Existing regional SASP moved to National	Rufforth (Yorkshire)	New SASP
Dunstable (Bedfordshire)	Existing regional SASP moved to National	Seighford (Staffordshire)	New SASP
Long Mynd (Shropshire)	Existing regional SASP moved to National	Chipping (Lancashire)	Existing regional SASP
Milfield (Northumberland)	Existing regional SASP moved to National	Parham (West Sussex)	Existing regional SASP
Nympsfield (Gloucestershire)	Existing regional SASP moved to National	Saltby (Lincolnshire)	Existing regional SASP
Pocklington (Yorkshire)	Existing regional SASP moved to National	Shobdon (Herefordshire)	Existing regional SASP
Gransden Lodge (Cambridgeshire)	Existing national SASP		
Husbands Bosworth (Leicestershire)	Existing national SASP		
Lasham (Hampshire)	Existing national SASP		
Sutton Bank (Yorkshire)	Existing national SASP		
Tibenham (Norfolk)	Existing national SASP		

Then the pandemic hit. We quickly undertook a survey of all clubs to establish what help was needed. A significant impact came from the rates group who quickly assessed that 61 clubs were eligible for COVID19 grant. Whilst most clubs were self-sufficient the rates group did get involved in a significant number where we had to lobby and explain the rules to the Local Authority. Sadly, some clubs were not eligible because they did not pay rates, their rateable value was too high, or they were on military sites. We continue to support clubs obtaining the more recent COVID19 grants.

BGA business rates team have also been successful in supporting two clubs through the check and challenge process to secure substantial reductions in their rateable value. Two further challenges are in the process of assessment by VOA. We also responded to the government's review of business rates and we started to try to arrange a meeting to discuss the mechanics of the 2023 revaluation, but lockdown prevented progress on that. We shall try to progress it as and when it seems likely we could achieve it.

We supported Bicester Gliding Club in their dispute with site owners, Bicester Motion. Sadly, an acceptable outcome could not be found and the club closed though there is still a soaring group on the site. Elsewhere we have been supporting a club in changing their legal structure, we have advised two clubs on lease renewals, 5 clubs of CASC related issues, helped with GDPR and two other clubs with planning disputes.

We organised a virtual Club Management Conference where the themes were strategic planning, member development and marketing. This has been followed up with a regular online surgery to provide help and networking for club officials.

We applied for and won a Department for Transport Airfield Grant. This will provide us with five days free consultancy which we will use to improve our guidance on non-official aerodrome safeguarding.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the Development Committee who give up their time to help clubs, often quietly in the background.

Dave Latimer

Chair

Flight Operations Committee Report

It goes without saying that 2021 has been a challenging year for everyone. The impact of COVID-19 has meant that much of our gliding operations have been either restricted or curtailed and that pilots have struggled to maintain currency and enjoy the sport as much as they would wish to. Much has happened in the background where committees have carried on with meetings and discussions within the gliding community and with aviation authorities. We have seen our steady progress towards sailplane pilot licences, and the changes that have evolved following the UK leaving the EU.

An area of continuing issue has been airspace incursions. Although flying has been much reduced across the whole of the aviation community, where flying has been permitted airspace incursions have occurred at a higher rate than in previous years. Much of this can only be put down to the anxiety to get airborne and not being in current practice, as well as the temporary and not well understood nature of some airspace shutdowns.

In March 2021, the very significant airspace changes around Farnborough came into place. The CAA had made great efforts to ensure that the air charts with the new information on were available to the public and most pilots were able to obtain those charts and put them into use. Airspace incursions around Farnborough have been high, but I am glad to say that the majority of those were caused by the powered general aviation community really getting used to some of the issues that exist. You only have to look at the chart in that area to see how complex the airspace is and how careful pilots will need to be. Around the country there are several 'local airspace incursion teams' (LAIT's). The CAA support them, and they are an excellent way of involving all elements of the GA community in identifying and resolving issues at local level.

The BGA is well represented on the Airprox board where gliders have been involved. There is still an issue when powered aircraft overfly winch launch sites at unsafe heights. Clubs are urged to report these incidents through the BGA so that we can continue to voice our concerns.

The DfT's initiative in making money available for aircraft conspicuity systems has been popular and many pilots and clubs have installed them. The challenge now is to ensure that the pilots know exactly how to use the kit and where and when they must be used.

There has been at least one benefit as result of COVID19. A three hour Zoom meeting takes three hours! Five hours of travel and rail fares have been avoided. The use of on-line training is definitely something that we can continue with and improve on in the future.

Peter Moorehead
Chair

Instructing and Examining Committee Report

The public health situation has presented us all with challenges in the way we work at every level and impacted upon all our activities resulting in the Instructing and Examining Committee having to modify our ways of working. Our last face to face meeting took place just before lock-down in March and since then the Committee has been meeting online in the evening resulting in a more flexible and efficient use of time as well as saving on travel time. This change has led to shorter more focused discussions and decision making enhancing the contribution of the committee to the BGA. The committee continues to consist of all SREs, the BGA Lead FCL examiner, and other invited experts. To further develop links with the Safety Committee, Tim Freegar, Safety Committee chair, has joined our meetings and provided valuable input.

The planning for the development of SFCL Flight Examiners to be in place for the April 2021 transition has been modified following the decision to move the transition closing date out to 8th December 2021. The restrictions across the country would also have made the required assessments of competence difficult if not impossible to achieve. However, the aim is to continue to ensure that we have enough of the resource necessary to support the ongoing needs of clubs as we move forward with SFCL.

The challenges facing everyone last year impacted heavily on the planned instructor training resulting in the cancellation of scheduled courses from springtime through to Autumn. Webinars and online training resources have been further developed with a blended version of the initial Teaching and Learning module being delivered by home study and online teaching. Flight Instructor seminars to support those instructors who have already transitioned across to SFCL to maintain their privileges have also been delivered by a one-day online interactive webinar. Bronze theory exams can now be taken remotely, and several alleviations have been put in place to ensure that pilots and instructors do not lose out with ongoing privileges, qualifications, and revalidations due to the pandemic. BGA advice and guidance for instructors and pilots getting back to flying was produced to help clubs when flying could recommence after lockdown. Currency and recency were a matter of concern, with pilots coming back after a long break, facing enhanced hygiene/safety requirements and some instructors understandably not willing to instruct in this difficult environment.

Work has continued with the development of the necessary training programmes that will be required by clubs going forward into SFCL in 2021 and an initiative for the delivery of instructor training at club level has made good progress. Concerns over the growing number of aero-tow upset incidents prompted a great deal of discussion by the committee members and resulted in Andy Miller undertaking the task of writing new guidance for general use and inclusion in the Instructors Manual. Andy and a hard-working team are also contributing to a new student pilot manual from 'Gliding World' which we look forward to seeing soon.

As the situation with the pandemic improves, we are looking forward to getting back to encouraging and developing pilots to become instructors into 2021 as there is a need to catch up on lost instructor courses as early as we can. The virus enforced challenges have led to new ways of working, some of which will continue to benefit our instructor training and development into the future. Finally, I would like to thank everyone involved in furthering pilot and instructor training over what has been a very difficult time for all.

Colin Sword
Chair

Junior Gliding Report

The past year has seen us have to make some big changes to our normal yearly structure as we have adapted to the pandemic. We have kept active and engaged with the Juniors by using online engagement during the periods we have been stopped from flying. During the summer we were reluctant to promote any large-scale physical events for the juniors to avoid putting pressure on the clubs and to protect the club members.

Winter Series

February 2020 was round 2 of our 8th year of the winter series. We were hosted by the Midland Gliding Club at the Long Mynd for 3 days. We had our largest turnout yet of more than 100 Juniors turning up to fly or take part on the ground.

The weather favoured us and although we had to stop at times due to 50kt+ gusts, the wind was directly on the ridge.

Over the 3 days of flying, we managed 124 launches and flew 201 hours.

In March, the Junior Development Team visited the Derbyshire and Lancashire gliding club at Camphill to look into its viability as a potential new site for the Winter Series. They had a warm reception and some great flying. The D&LGC were interested to host a future round of the Winter Series and we hope to be there for a future round.

Online 1

Round 3 of the winter series was due to be held at Shenington Gliding Club. This was cancelled due to the Government restrictions and the first online events were set up to mark what would have been our final round for the 8th year of the Winter Series. Instead, we began our first round of online events. We used the gliding simulator Condor, to set up the CondorVirus competition. We had six consecutive online flying days of live racing with 40 competitors joining from across the country and from across the world.

We began our first round of online videos and webinars in April. The subjects for these videos included Potential Soaring in Wales, Glider Pilot to Airline Pilot and 2 webinars on competition flying. We kept good social interaction going through out the spring months with online polls, question and answers, games, and group discussions.

Summer Flying

Due to the pandemic, summer flying was severely restricted. Junior pilots made local events at their own clubs, but UK Junior gliding did not hold any events. The British team junior squad were able to compete in the Czech national championships as part of their training for the worlds in 2022 (pushed back from 2021). The Junior national championships was cancelled for the first time. A task week was held at Denbigh on the last week in August with a reduced capacity of entrants but aimed at the junior pilots who wanted to get something out of the short summers flying.

Online 2

October would have marked the beginning of the 9th round of our Winter Series. As government guidance restricted this, we held more than a month of online events and webinars. Over the summer we had been able to refine our online content and timings and so we began with an opening talk on Junior Gliding by the Chairman of the BGA, Andy Perkins and one of the founders of UK Junior Gliding, Steve Pozerskis.

We had the return of online racing with the Condor Championships. This was played out over 6 weeks with a practice race on one night and then a race night a couple of days later. The webinars were spaced out to have one each week and were talks by guests on a variety of subjects. These ranged from careers guidance for those wanting information getting into commercial aviation to gliding subjects such as bronze talks and glider maintenance talks. We averaged around 100 people listening to the live webinar each evening. The webinars were recorded and put up on YouTube and these recordings have between 500 and 1000 views on average so far.

Thanks

There are too many people involved in each year's events to thank everyone individually. However, we would like to thank all the people that have made this year's events possible. A big thank you goes to the Midland Gliding Club and their instructors for their help on our expedition at the beginning of the year. Thank you also to the 16 instructors who brought ten 2-seat gliders from all over the country to make sure everyone flew that weekend. We would also like to thank the BGA and all the speakers that have made the webinars possible. Finally, we would like to thank our sponsors and supporters, in particular Flight Deck Wingman, who has been supporting us throughout our events this year, and Navboys, who have been providing prizes to the for our online competitions.

Junior Gliding Development Team

Safety Committee Report

The Safety Committee continues to analyse accidents, produce, and disseminate safety advice and training material, and support the Instructors and Examiners Committee's development of the training syllabus.

COVID-19. Much of our activity in 2020 has been in support of various flying restart initiatives, where we have supported the Instructors and Examiners Committee by providing analysis to assist the development of good practice. Club CFIs have made an excellent job of managing the restoration and maintenance of pilot currency and, while a few accidents have shown hints of rustiness, there has at least been no significant rise in the rate or severity of gliding accidents.

Analysis. Our extensive accident database and report archive continues to provide a rich evidence base for safety analysis and development, supported by a positive, no-blame reporting culture that is actively promoted by our network of dedicated Club Safety Officers. Although COVID-19 lockdowns have made regional seminars impractical this year, we shall resume them in 2021. We provided some support to AAIB accident investigations.

Communication. CFIs and instructors remain a key line of communication as well as an invaluable source of practical advice and considered wisdom. We continue to work closely with the Instructors Committee to engage, learn and inform about safety aspects, training implications and key messages, and develop the advice collected in Managing Flying Risk – a live document that we have further revised in 2020.

For more direct communication, we have continued to provide topical 'Straighten Up & Fly Right' articles for S&G. Several safety resources, including guidance on topics from Safe Winch Launching to rigging advice, are available from the BGA website: please make use of them.

Accidents. Statistically, this was another unremarkable year for gliding accidents, with 1 tragic fatality and 7 serious injuries being typical since the introduction of FLARM and the Safe Winch Launch initiative: it is crucial that we maintain these safe winch launch practices. In the periods in which flying was permitted, rates of substantial damage accidents were disappointingly similar to recent past years; a number of accidents and incidents could easily have proved more serious, and there remains much room for improvement. Details have been published in the 2020 Accident Review.

Thanks. I would again like to thank CSOs and regional teams for relentlessly promoting safety at club level; and numerous individual pilots and instructors for personally adopting and promoting a positive safety culture, diligent reporting and safety-related suggestions. Hugh Browning once more merits particular acknowledgement for endless hours of work on all fronts, as do Ed Lockhart, for compiling the excellent accident summaries for S&G, the Safety Committee, and our tenacious BGA accident investigators.

Safe flying in 2021!

Tim Freearde
Chair

Technical Committee Report

Summary – challenging years, past and future.

The COVID crisis struck just after the early year 2020 maintenance season, and airworthiness did not appear to be inconvenienced too greatly during the subsequent limited season. We congratulate several individuals who used innovation to make two-seat gliding a safer environment. In the same period, we have also been required to undertake the implementation of major changes to EASA regulation, In many ways, these represent simplifications which we have sought over several years, but the continuing uncertainty as to the full impact of Brexit now means, sadly, that an additional year of change and adaption on leaving the EU will continue through 2021. In difficult and evolving political times, the BGA is maintaining in close contact with CAA on these, and other matters which may develop more national autonomy in coming years.

The new Part-66L license for maintenance engineers has been enacted in UK. The automatic conversion window for BGA inspectors has now closed. It seems likely now that the licence requirement will be retained after UK departure from the EU, as it represents a global compatibility of engineer and maintenance standards which is in the interests of all for cross boarder operation and commerce. The BGA inspector system remains in place as part of our CAA approvals that support the continuing airworthiness and maintenance of Part 21 and non-Part 21 sailplanes.

'Part M Light' maintenance and airworthiness processes will still be implemented, completing on 24 March 2020, as these represent a rationalisation of the current airworthiness process operated by the BGA. Our original (pre EASA) practice of combining the annual inspection and ARC renewal is recommended. The Part ML process emphasises the legal responsibility on owners, individuals, or clubs, to ensure the airworthiness of those airframes in their care and has enabled BGA to restore many of the privileges that we had previously available to gliding. In addition, we are actively investigating with CAA what new opportunities the BGA might negotiate on a purely national basis.

The BGA's education programme for inspectors, managed by Gordon MacDonald our CTO, has intensified in response to the new requirements of Part-66L licenses. During the year, Gordon has completed the training and validation of several new inspectors, adding to our ranks at this opportune time. Further, Gordon's 'webinars', including one on 'Pilot Owner Maintenance', have been well viewed and received. Our Regional Technical Officers (RTO's) continue to provide valued technical advice at the membership level over wide aspects of the technical side of gliding. The BGA continues its programme of Quality Auditors to meet quality targets set by the CAA is led by Keith Morgan and Andy Brind. We thank all for their assistance including those At the BGA Office who have maintained a timely airworthiness process through challenging times.

Following UK formal withdrawal for the EU, there is an additional tranche of proforma changes on our routine forms. For example, ARC applications required new 'headers' on 1st January 2021 to be valid. All the forms are available on the BGA members website airworthiness pages, along with a wide range of other publications and links for the convenience of inspectors and ARC engineers.

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