

The Gliders



Issue 1

April 2019

Welcome to *The Gliders*

Welcome to "The Gliders" (that's how we are known locally), the new Scottish Gliding Centre newsletter. After a number of years we have resurrected a newsletter and plan to produce an issue every couple of months. This is your newsletter and contributions by all members are very welcome and encouraged. Please send your contributions to the office or directly to me.

Wolf Rossmann



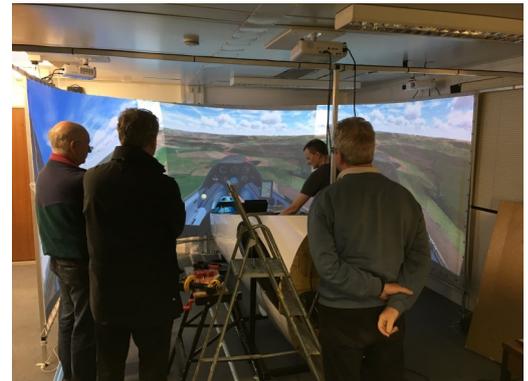
A Message from your Chairman

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Welcome to the new Scottish Gliding Centre Newsletter. A big Thank You to Wolf Rossmann for offering to put this together on top of his existing workload as club Safety Officer. I write this a couple of weeks before the AGM on 6 April so it might be my first, and last, contribution as Chairman.

After a difficult start to last year I'm very pleased to see how things are developing at the club, especially over the last six months. There is a refreshing and invigorating feel about the airfield with lots of people putting in their time to improve our facilities. There is the new entrance display, the revised office layout with a welcoming open window, the new simulator nearing completion, the cleared-out blister hangar, road repairs and



the new tug about to be built. Most of the changes are down to volunteers seeing what is needed and just getting stuck in.... with only a little prodding from the Club General Manager. The new effort builds on the work by the people like Jim Thompson, John Dunnington, Z Goudie, John Galloway who have been working hard in the background for years. A huge thank you to everyone who gives their time on

club activities – from grass cutting to inspecting to winching to instructing to tugging. Without you all doing your bit the club would struggle to survive and all of our flying would be much more expensive

In addition to the general improvements about the airfield we are starting to implement the strategic plan - with reversing membership decline being the highest priority. We have Gerry Marshal as membership secretary leading a sub team in this area. Kerrin Dutton is now looking after our marketing and social media activities to improve our visibility and profile in the local area and beyond.

The CFI and team have been working hard to

get new instructors trained up and those who already have ratings moved up to the next level. We need more instructors still to make up for those due to retire shortly.

It's great to see St Andrews University gliding club now appearing each weekend to fly with us and obviously enjoying their flying. Edinburgh University gliding club continue to go from strength to strength showing what can be done with a K21 on cross country flights.

We did have a spate of accidents and damage to aircraft last year which cost us all a lot of money including replacing two broken Junior canopies. Let's not repeat this in 2019.

Alastair Much

Eager Beavers

A group of Beavers from the 5th Fife colony visited Portmoak on Sunday 17th March and everybody had a great time. For anyone who doesn't know: the junior branch of the Scouts are Cubs, and if you're too little to be a Cub, you can be a Beaver. After a briefing about airfield safety and how gliders are launched they and the adult helpers had a close up look at some gliders and watched them taking off by winch and aerotow.

As part of their Air Activities badge they also needed to talk to some glider pilots and Sant Cervantes, Tiny Irving, Kerrin Dutton, Fred Bull and Evan Skelhorn kindly agreed to come and be grilled by the beavers, covering a wide range of gliding experience between them.

Many thanks also to Gary Donachie and David Coats and others on the airfield who let them sit in the gliders and helped with lots of lifting in and out. Some of the adult helpers were so impressed they bought trial lesson vouchers for friends and family, and we look forward to welcoming one or two of the beavers back as trainee pilots when they're just a little older.

Kate Byrne



Club History—The Yellow Pole

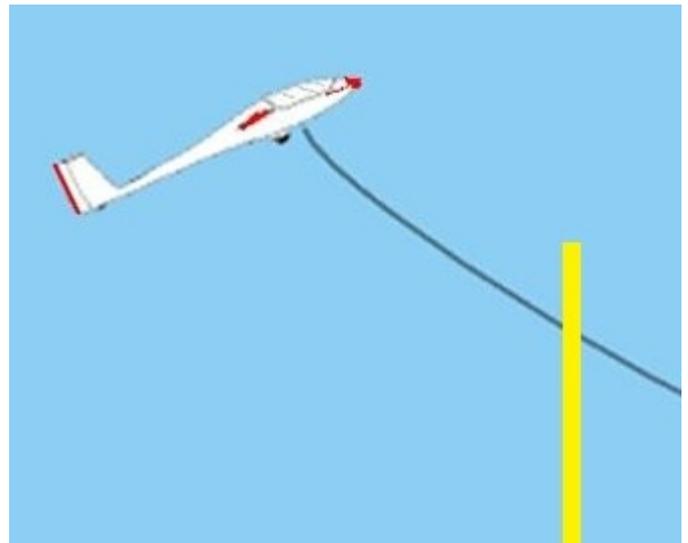
In the early days of Portmoak, the SGU only owned a couple of narrow strips of land, each about 100 metres wide. The main landing area, in a west wind, was a slice of what we now call the south field, and launching took place along the line of the ash strip – which was originally

caused by the cables wearing away the grass, then the sandy soil. Industrial ash was then added to fill up the developing trench, bringing various other problems – but that's another story!

The western half of the airstrip was aligned with the ditch, which was the southern boundary of the airstrip, and that is why the ash strip takes a dog leg to the south, half way along. The area south of the ditch, known as the plantation, was wooded, and during a winch launch, once the cable was all off the ground, it tended to drift into the wood. The cable could then become snagged in the branches, resulting in a somewhat curtailed launch! A solution had to be found.

One of the members at the time worked for Glasgow Corporation, and he was able to obtain a tramway pole, surplus to requirements as the Glasgow tramway system was then being dismantled. This was painted yellow, and erected at the apex of the dog leg. The launch cable then rode up the pole, and by the time it reached the top, it was high enough to clear the trees in the plantation! In the glider, there was a noticeable jerk when the cable pinged off the top of the pole!

The system worked well enough, although the friction of the cable on the pole must have increased the frequency of cable breaks some-



what! The club eventually purchased a strip of land in the plantation and cut down the larger trees. (The smaller ones supplied the members with Xmas trees for a few years!)

The pole thereby became unnecessary and was taken down, resulting in smoother winch launches for all!

Bruce Marshall

Notes from the Membership Secretary

Recently, I have taken over the role of Membership Secretary. During the last few months, I have principally been involved in understanding some of the underlying member and flight statistics with a view to making some decisions on the next steps. It has been an instructive exercise.

Our principal club aims are:

1. To engage and retain members to reverse the decline in membership and to shift the age profile whilst
2. Increasing our female to male member ratio.
3. We are already an undoubted success in developing Cadet members.

Membership numbers and retention rates

Currently, membership is approximately 215 and the club plans to increase this to 230 this year, rising to 250 plus. Particularly, we wish to increase our female membership ratio and attract individuals within the 25 - 45 age range.

These are challenging objectives given past

performance and aircraft availability.

As existing members of the club, you have a vital role in securing and retaining new members.

In recent years, the statistics seem to indicate that we are poor at retaining newer members and we need to think of how we *can all help* to support and embrace someone in their early stages of club membership.

Targeted recruiting: 25 - 45 age range. Can you help?

Female membership: Can you help?

Welcome meetings

As one step in helping to achieve the above, the first of a number of Welcome meetings has been held

New Members' booklet

Kate Byrne's original new member's booklet is currently under revision and available from 1st April.

Mentoring / Senior pilot role

Again, in pursuit of improving retention the following are under discussion but far from resolved.

1. Is there a way experienced (Silver Badge Plus?) club pilots who already do not have a significant club role could become a mentor / guide to 2/3 newer members for 12 - 18 months?
2. Should we develop and formalise a Senior Pilot role in the club with discrete responsibilities?

Club foyer

We have upgraded the entrance area with a view to generating an atmosphere that can provide some inspiration and aspiration to members new and old.

Open Day

We are hosting a **Family, Friends and Local Community Open Day on Sunday 23rd June**. A range of activities are planned, so spread the word to your family and friends about a chance to see the club close-up. Full details towards the end of April.



Many volunteers will be required to roster during the day to help as stewards and / or trial lessons.

Pray for good weather!

Feedback

As I hold no copyright on good ideas, please feel free to speak with me about any suggestions that may develop the engagement and retention of you as members of this club.

Gerry Marshall

Evenings at the airfield and other events

As every year, starting this month there is plenty going on in the early evenings from 17:00 onwards. If you haven't seen the various emails, here is a reminder:

Monday	Ab Initio Flying Group
Tuesday	Air Experience Flying
Wednesday	Aerotow launches
Thursday	Ab Initio and Early Solo
Friday	Air Experience Flying
Weekend	By Arrangement

Other Dates for your diary

Inter Club League

27 / 28 April

BBQ

27 April, everyone invited

Gasco Safety Evening

4 May, 18:30

Open Day

23 June

Latest additions to our team of instructors

Congratulations to our new BIs: Mark Bradford, Mitchell Skene and John Thomas

And congratulations to our new full Cat instructors: David Coats and Phil Dolan