

Booker Gliding Club

Newsletter

April
2025



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Website update – new resources – page 6

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Member achievements

This month we acknowledge not only flying achievements but also all the work that members have been doing to improve our kit and premises.

First the flying:

Greg Watkins - first solo

Greg has previously flown motorgliders and paragliders, he has now come over to sailplanes and achieved that all-important first solo.

Deiniol Heywood - first hour

Deiniol has achieved his first hour of soaring towards his Bronze cross-country endorsement.



Luke Bishop and **Dean Blair** have completed their tug pilot training and done their first solo tows.

And now the housework:

Teams of members have been working hard recently to spruce up the club.

Tug GH has been given a thorough clean and de-grease.



A team got down on their knees to clean the mud out of the drain in front of the hangar, to reduce the chance of it flooding next time it rains hard.





The sim trailer is almost unrecognisable after being given a good scrub with lots of noxious chemicals.

The clubhouse has been spring cleaned – scrubbed, vacuumed, polished.



A group of those who know how to do it made up a new set of tow ropes.

Instruction on splicing available on request – it's not that difficult!



A team got together to set up the water bowser and plumb it in. Ballast now available for racing pilots – and if you are curious about how it helps, ask for a briefing.

Quite a few members turned out to hack back the scrub and cut down hedge and trees on the boundary at 06, to improve safety on take-offs on 24. There is still work to be done but there has been significant improvement.



And finally – the grass has started growing so the mower has had several outings, as well as the roller, so the take-off strip and the trailer park are looking good.

Many thanks to all the members – too numerous to name - who have spent time working on these and other projects for the benefit of the whole club. This is how it works – don't be shy about volunteering!

If you notice something not being done, step forward, or take a look at the list which will shortly be appearing in the clubhouse and consider what you could take on. It doesn't have to be a major project, even emptying the bins regularly would be a valuable contribution.

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There has been time for fun as well, here's Graham launching in his Petrel. Designed by Slingsby in the late 1930s, only three were built, and Graham's is the only one still airworthy.



And here's Alex in Graham's Lunak, about to go and practise aerobatics.

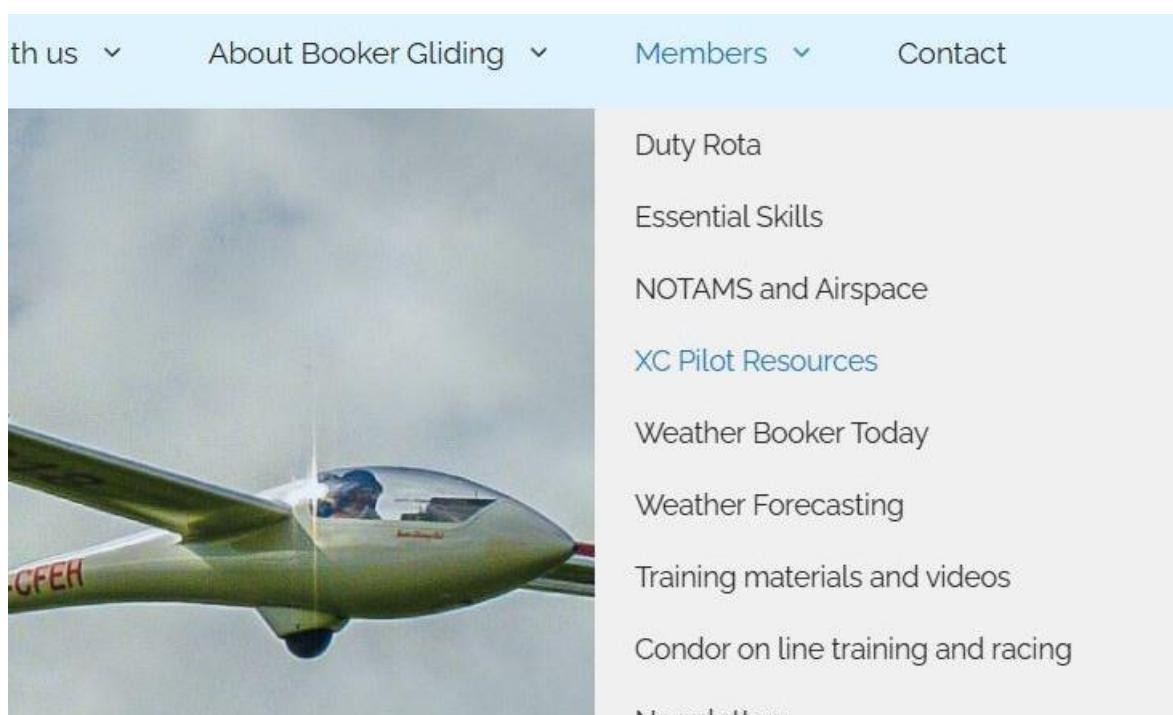


Information and resources for pilots – website update

The Booker Gliding Club website [members area](#) has been updated and some of the information from our old site finally copied across.

Newly added is a page of [Essential Skills](#). Documents describe skills that glider pilots should be familiar with, but that are not always a core part of pilot training, most of this information is also available in the [Useful Information](#) folder on the bus.

There is also a new page with links and resources (mostly downloads) aimed at cross country pilots. The NOTAMS and Airspace page has also been expanded and updated.



After a few weeks Google should be able to find much of this information for you if you start your search with [bookergliding](#).

As well as providing resources and information for newer members, the website is one of our key marketing tools. If you have experience with websites, or marketing, we would love to hear any ideas you might have that would make the site, Booker Gliding Club and gliding in general, more accessible.

If you are already gliding at Booker then let us know whether there are any gaps in the on-line information available to you that you would like to see filled. Even better, let us know if you would like to adopt and author any content for the site.

The British Gliding Association website is also frequently updated with new training information for pilots.

Cross country on-line video briefings

In addition to task weekends, Paul Brice has also initiated our on-line video (zoom) cross-country briefings which will continue for the season at 08:30 on days with good cross country soaring prospects. The briefings cover a wider area than the daily duty instructor local site briefing and include a review of soaring weather sites, selection of task area, task distance and specific tasks. All club members are welcome to join, although do bear in mind it is a briefing and not a lecture, pilots will be keen to get away and prepare for their flight.

Good cross-country days will be flagged up in advance wherever practicable.

Task weekends - update



Easter was – typically – disappointing in terms of weather, after several weeks of blue skies and good soaring, so the Task Weekend that Paul Brice had worked so hard to plan was rained off. Either side of Easter, cross- countries have been completed, and there have also been a couple of landouts – the theory is that if you don't land out occasionally you're not trying. It's certainly not something to be too worried about, just do what you've trained for, and then phone a friend.

*The next Task Weekend, in a change to the published date, is now **24th – 26th May** (the bank holiday weekend).*

All other dates are as shown on the [Events Diary](#) on our website.



National Women's 'Go Gliding' weekend – 26th/ 27th April

This year Booker took part in the BGA's initiative to encourage more women to try gliding. Our advertising attracted a number of enquiries and in the event we welcomed eight women who tried the sim and had trial lessons. We also flew the father of one of the participants. The launchpoint was very lively with family members so we hope there will be good reports of us.

One of our visitors emailed later to say:

I had a fab time. Really enjoyed John's instruction. I'd like to say thanks to you all for being so welcoming and friendly - I'll pop by again to say hello and hopefully, at some point, do one of your courses. Thanks again for making me feel so welcome! The sarnies were great, the company wonderful and the weather charming!

Thanks to all who helped make the weekend a success, in particular Anne for the magnificent lunches, Silke for driving the sim, Jan for joining the welcoming party, and the instructors, tuggies and club members who helped make the days go smoothly.

We do of course hope that we will see some of our visitors again – time will tell.

SPL update – deadline for applications

From **1 October 2025**, all solo glider pilots, other than those still under training, will need a Sailplane Pilot Licence (SPL). The BGA and CAA websites now contain comprehensive information about how to apply for and maintain an SPL.

The CAA has issued the following update:

All pilots whose recommendations are sent to the CAA [by the BGA] by 30th June 2025 are guaranteed to have their licence issued by 30th September 2025. Applications submitted after this date will be assessed on a first come, first serve basis and may result in pilots being unable to exercise privileges temporarily.

Note that initial applications go to the BGA who pass them on to the CAA, so you need to get your application to the BGA as soon as possible in order to hit the CAA's deadline.

From the BGA



Important consultation

In March 2024, the CAA launched a 10-week public consultation seeking stakeholder views on proposed changes to licences and ratings across the GA aircraft categories. There was a strong response from the sailplane community. As a result, working with the BGA, the CAA has made several proposals to Government to amend the UK SFCL implementing rules.

The detailed SFCL Acceptable Means of Compliance (AMC) and Guidance Material (GM) associated with the changes described above have been drafted by the CAA and are now subject to a new consultation that closes on **6th May 2025**.

It is important that the proposed changes are supported.

BGA guidance including links to respond to the consultation are available [here](#). Submitting a response takes only a few minutes. With luck it will be the last consultation for a while.

Airspace

Awareness of airspace and associated hazards is essential for safe and enjoyable flying. Resources to help with managing the risks are available [here](#).

Collision avoidance

Help with collision avoidance, including guidance on the technology available to assist lookout, is available [here](#).

Dates for your diary – summer flying

2025 programme

14 th – 19 th May	Airfield closed for the Private Flyer show
1 st June	Airfield closed - Chiltern Vintage Tractors marking the 80 th anniversary of VE and raising money for Thames Valley Air Ambulance

The full programme of events additional to our normal flying operation can now be found on the [events diary](#) on the website.

For day-to-day ops, check the [duty rota](#).

From 1st April 2025 we are operating 7 days a week. Adam will be supervising Tuesday – Friday, weekends will be covered by the member instructor rota, and Mondays will be licensed pilots only – although instruction will be available if an instructor offers to cover the day.



The Severn – pic taken by Simon Jones during the 2024 mini expedition to Aston Down

Club Communications

We use WhatsApp groups, as below:

Booker Gliding Club – general club information and notifications including details of online daily briefings

Booker Instructors – information and swap requests for instructors

Booker Expeditions – set up in the run up to each expedition.

If you wish to be included in any of these groups, contact the CFI.

Booker XC – for tasks, cross country discussion and feedback – contact Jane Moore or ask for a link on the main Whatsapp group

Booker Chat - for general chitchat – contact Jane Moore

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Condor Flyers – for those wanting to join in Condor group sessions – contact Bob Smith or Henry Ross or ask for a link on the main Whatsapp group.

The **Booker GC website** at www.bookergliding.co.uk has a Members Page. This contains the latest Club news snippets and links to previous newsletters, meeting minutes and several useful and informative Club documents. The Members' page is accessible to everybody (not just members) but certain documents, such as committee minutes, need a user ID and password. To obtain these, go to the members' page and click on the 'email Administrator' link. Don't forget to *include your name and membership number*.

For the latest news about what's happening check out

<https://www.facebook.com/bookerglidingclub>

The Booker blog is no longer maintained but has a wealth of pics and stories from previous years

<http://bookergc.blogspot.com/>

*** All views expressed within the newsletter are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Club or committee ***

Contributions to the newsletter are welcome. If you would like to submit an article for a future edition, please send it to Jane Moore at jxmoore@gmail.com

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