

Booker Gliding Club

Newsletter

February
2025



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The year so far

The winter has been a bit wet and windy, but a couple of spells of cold and frosty weather in early January enabled members to cast off the winter blues and get their feet in the air. The first Saturday of each month throughout the winter, Graham will be running [aerobatics training](#), very useful at all levels in improving handling, confidence and understanding of the flight envelope. Flying from a grass field does restrict our ability to launch after heavy rain but we do our best to make use of opportunities.



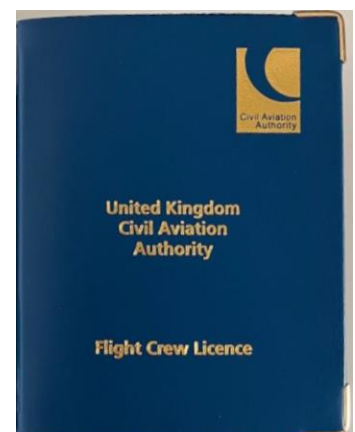
Meanwhile, on the ground, solo pilots working towards Bronze have been using their spare time well by attending briefings on topics covered in the exam. Many thanks to the instructors who give up their time to prepare and deliver this training.

More about the Sailplane Pilot Licence

While we wait for the weather to improve, why not get on with obtaining your SPL? So far we have been flying on BGA rules because gliding has been exempted from conversion to SPL, but this exemption – extended several times – will end on **30th September 2025** and new rules will apply. [Read on.](#)

Pilots who already have XC rating or Silver

If you already have your **XC Endorsement**, or a **pre-1996 Silver**, and you haven't applied for a Sailplane Pilot Licence (SPL), then you should **apply to the BGA** as soon as possible. The BGA processes applications and sends them to the CAA which then issues the



licence. Bear in mind that there are still many pilots who haven't applied so don't leave it to the last minute.

What if I do not receive my SPL before 30th September 2025?

You will not be a licensed pilot and, regardless of your skills and experience, you will need to **fly under supervision**. The supervising instructor may permit you to fly solo without check flights if you are suitably trained and in current flying practice.

What kind of medical do I need?

To hold an SPL you need to have a self-declared CAA **Pilot Medical Declaration** (or other officially recognised medical). To fly in an EASA State (EU not UK) you would also need a Class 2 medical or other medical recognised within that State.

Are there any other requirements?

To fly with an SPL you must comply with the **rolling recency** requirements detailed [here](#).



Pilots under training who have not yet completed an XC Endorsement

For those still to complete training to Cross Country standard, Bronze with an XC Endorsement will be an acceptable qualification for an SPL application until advised otherwise. Towards the end of summer 2025 we will migrate your training onto **new BGA training record cards**, so that when you have the syllabus completed and signed off you can apply for your Sailplane Pilot Licence. These new training records will capture the theory and practical tests that you have already taken and will be used to support SPL applications when/if Bronze/XC Endorsement forms are discontinued. Time limits for SPL theory tests are generous and similar to those for Bronze.

Is there an age restriction?

You need to be at least **16 years old** to apply for an SPL.

How does not having an SPL affect my flying?

After 30th September 2025 you will fly as a **student pilot under supervision** until you have an SPL. This includes flying solo when authorised by the supervising instructor.

What kind of medical do I need?

You need to have a self-declared CAA **Pilot Medical Declaration** (PMD) or other officially recognised medical*.

**There is currently a requirement (considered to be a regulatory anomaly) that after 30th September 2025 a newly trained SPL applicant would need to hold a Class 2 medical at the point they apply for their SPL. After the SPL is issued then a PMD would be acceptable when the medical needs renewing. The BGA and CAA are working to remove this requirement before 30th September 2025 so that only a PMD is required for the initial application.*

The Rules



All pilots can continue to operate under existing BGA rules until 30th September 2025. The Sailplane Pilot Licensing rules, along with acceptable means of compliance plus guidance material, are published by the [CAA here](#). It is possible there will be amendments to these rules before 30th September 2025.



Bronze (Sailplane Pilot Licence) Theory

Thanks to Adam Berrisford, Bob Smith, Jane Moore and William Parker for Bronze briefings already delivered in 2025. The schedule for the remaining Bronze briefings is provided below. All of these take place in the Booker Briefing Room. We have two provisional dates for pilots to take the Bronze Exam and to get their forms and logbooks signed up. Pilots may also self-study and can take the exam at any time throughout the year; you will need assistance and approval from the CFI to sit the exam.

Getting Bronze theory done during the winter should improve confidence and speed progress to a Sailplane Pilot Licence in 2025.

Of course, these sessions are open to anyone who wants to refresh or update their knowledge or just catch up with some gliding gossip.

2025 Date	Session 1 - 9:30	Session 2 - 11:00
Sat 8 th Feb	Communications Simon Jones	Principles of Flight Stuart Whitehouse
Sat 15 th Feb	Navigation Steve Williams	Navigation workshop/practical Steve Williams
Sat 22 nd Feb	General Knowledge and Emergency equipment The main topic being Glider Instruments and systems Henry Ross	Operational Procedures Bob Smith, mostly including Field Landings William Parker
Sat 22 nd Feb	Provisional/Optional - Bronze Exam Session 14:00	
Sat 1 st Mar	Provisional/Optional - Bronze Exam Session 11:00	



Young pilot competition training



Each year the BGA supports competition training for young pilots alongside the UK Junior Nationals, which will run this year from 16th to 25th August at Aston Down. This year there are up to 10 places available for aspiring pilots to learn from some of the best. If you are interested in being awarded a sponsored place, [please follow this link](#). The closing date is 1st April 2025

Bursaries and scholarships

Several generous organisations offer funds for aspiring pilots. Current opportunities include the following:



The Royal Aero Club Trust bursary scheme embraces all types of air sports and aviation-related activities, including gliding.

Flying Bursaries and grants are available for those wishing to advance to the next level or to upgrade their existing qualifications. Advanced Bursaries are also available to pilots wishing to enter international or national competitions or other prestigious events, or to advance their qualifications to a higher level to the benefit of the sport (eg to gain an instructor qualification).

Applicants must hold British Citizenship, be permanently resident in UK, and aged 14-21 years, or up to 24 years for advanced bursaries.

Closing date 31st March 2025.

[Read more and apply here!](#)



The Honourable Company of Air Pilots (HCAP) gliding scholarships are designed to support the BGA's Junior Gliding activity, for those aged under 25. The scholarships are residential and are offered to people over the age of 16. The one-week residential course at a BGA Junior Gliding Centre can take a candidate to first solo.

The closing date for 2025 applications is **25th February 2025 at 12 noon.**

[Read more and apply here!](#)



The Royal Air Squadron is offering individual bursaries to support BGA assistant instructor training. The focus is on pilots between the ages of 16 and 26, with the aim of developing individual flying aptitude, knowledge and experience as well as encouraging professional ambition.

The closing date for 2025 applications is **15th February 2025**.

[You can read more and apply here.](#)

Task weekends – briefing sessions

In advance of the task weekends planned for the summer, we will be running three early season soaring and cross-country preparation sessions on 8th, 22nd and 29th March at 0930 in the Clubhouse.

On **8th March**, we will have two lectures / discussions around early cross country soaring and task setting.

On **22nd March**, we will cover badge and diploma flights and setting personal goals.

On **29th March**, Steve Williams will be discussing the use of soaring software.

All being well, this will position us well for the first extended task weekend over Easter.

Paul Brice

Expedition news

The date of the Spring expedition to **Denbigh (Lleweni Parc)** is fast approaching – **Saturday 8th March**. Week 1 will see the Duo Discus 315 based there, with Doug Hilton instructing, week 2 is for licensed pilots only. If you are interested in



coming along, even if you are pre-solo, have a word with an instructor to find out more. It's definitely a good way to shake off the dust of winter!

In May the airfield will be closed for a few days for the Private Flyer/London Elite event. Although this only lasts two days, the build up and break down of the show means a week of no gliding. However, Jon Sugden has offered to take the Duo Discus 315 to **Aston Down (Cotswold Gliding Club)** from **Thursday 15th to Sunday 18th May** so that members can practise flying from a different site and fly over unfamiliar countryside – and water. We could also take one of the club single seaters if there is demand. More details about this in due course but pencil it in your diary (or the electronic equivalent).



From the BGA



The most recent BGA email update contained some useful reminders about **managing flying risk**. At this time of year when we are prevented from flying by adverse weather or a boggy field, it is easy to get out of practice, and we need to give more thought to preparing for flight. Click [here](#) for all the BGA's recommendations,

which include the following:

Time Always give yourself time to prepare yourself and your glider.

Legal? If you have an SPL, consider rolling recency and validity of medical declaration or medical certificate as required.

Fit to fly? Confirm you are fit to fly using the 'I'm Safe' mnemonic. [There's more detail here](#). If in doubt, stay on the ground.

Current? Is your total experience and recent experience enough for the type of flying you are about to embark on? It's worth have a look at the [currency barometer here](#).

Aware? Weather, airspace, NOTAMs, site operations, field condition, etc.

Dates for your diary

2025 programme

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](#).



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.

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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

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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