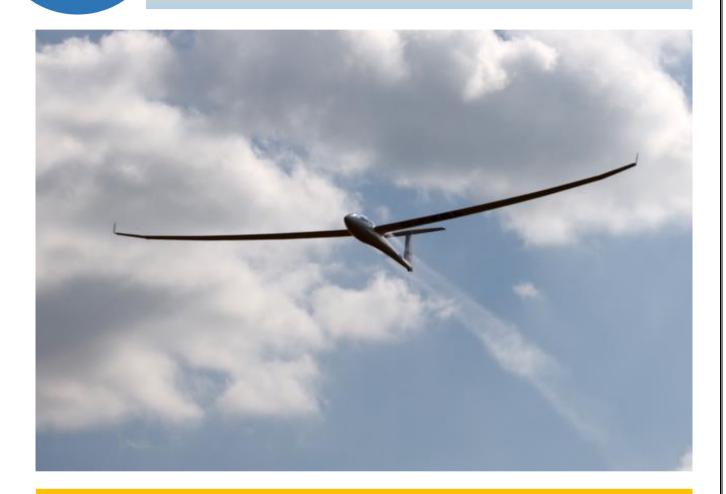
lews letter

Booker Regionals entry list still open!

We're back in the air!



The club is temporarily based at Chiltern Park

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May ZUZ

Return to the skies

After a lot of hard work on our behalf by the BGA and others, recreational flying restarted on 15th May in England, and many pilots are now able to enjoy the skies again. At Booker we have had to be patient for a little while longer while we wait for the airfield management to open up the airfield again. In the meantime, we have gone on our second expedition of the year – to Chiltern Park. Richard Crockett, CFI, has been working very hard with Dennis Pearson of Chiltern Airsports and RAF Benson to establish procedures for gliding out of an airfield underneath the stub of the Benson MATZ, and on 21st May we took some gliders over and set up camp. At the moment, in view of everyone's lack of currency, and the need to avoid infection, flying is for licensed pilots only, and solo, but we hope to accommodate more people in due course.

We are very grateful to the BGA for their contribution to getting the ban on recreational flying lifted, and to Dennis Pearson of Chiltern Airsports for welcoming us to Chiltern Park – location details on their website: https://www.chilternairsports.com/

The Chairman's view

To be philosophical I suppose it was somewhat naïve to expect that, once we were thrown in to this surreal Covid lockdown, there would be an easy slide out of it. Certainly going in seemed easy and unequivocal. Coming out seems as if it will be confusing and painful for most of us, all across the country.

For the vast majority of businesses, coping with the unknown has been a nightmare. In our case we have been incredibly lucky to have our finances looked after so competently and our operations kept alive so professionally. Your Committee is comprised of people with a mind-boggling array of just the right kind expertise and knowledge



 myself definitely not included – to the extent that we find ourselves ready to respond as the restrictions are gradually lifted.

Of course we are not entirely independent. We rely largely on the airfield being at the same state of readiness and, doubtless for very good reasons, this has not been the case. However, at time of writing it does seem as if the Gordian knot is unravelling, although perhaps not at the pace we would like.

In the meantime, we are fortunate to have been welcomed by Chiltern Park and solo pilots with licences will be flying there (under supervision as no-one is current after the long layoff), in the next few days. It is important to stress that we would have sent our two seaters there if government guidelines allowed so the current holdup at Booker airfield is not itself affecting the training aspects of our operation.

Touching briefly on the Northside prospect, the council tells us that the project is still very much alive and the processes to bring it to fruition are still being pushed forward, albeit possibly somewhat sluggishly due to other obvious distractions.

I must again pay tribute to Richard who has tirelessly and inventively done wonders to keep not just our operations but also us as members up to scratch and ready to get into the air where we belong.

<u>Symeon Economou</u> chairman@bookergliding.co.uk

Achievements

We have had no real-life gliding achievements in the last few weeks, but we have been improving our skills in other areas such as task setting. Every Saturday Nils Wedi, our resident Met Man, has been running the Booker Virtuals. His briefing started with general climate/weather news and then discussed the forecast for the day. The 'homework' for participants was to set a task for the day's conditions, which Nils then judged on the following criteria:

- link to the weather
- originality
- optimality (legs relative to wind direction, max points)
- do-ability (with a Club Class glider)
- ambition
- airspace/Notams/safety (incl. landout options)

After eight weeks we have all learned a great deal about the complexity of task setting, and the weekly winners are as follows:

Week 1 – Henry Ross

Week 2 – Denis Campbell

Week 3 – Jane Moore

Week 4 - Jane Moore

Week 5 – Doug Hilton

Week 6 - Zeljko Livancic

Week 7 – John Otty

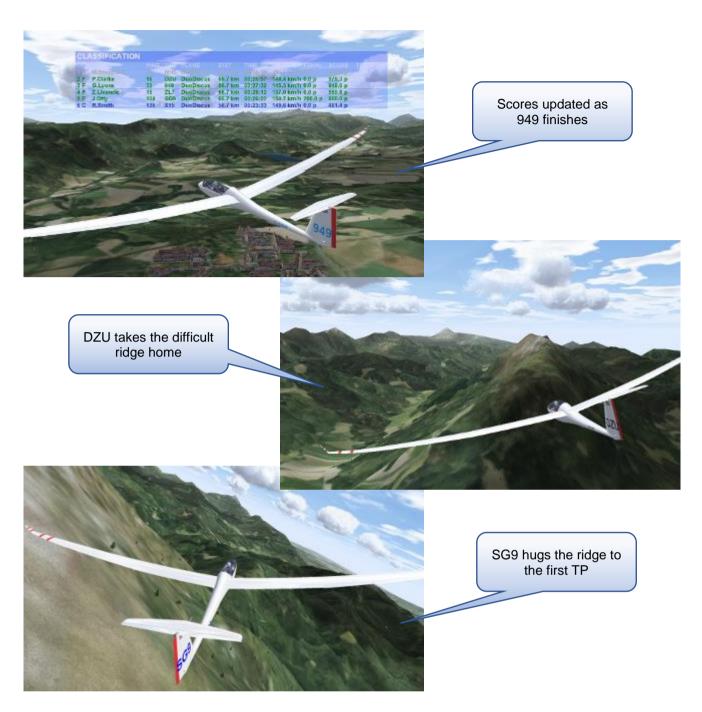
Week 8 – John Herman



Condor gliding simulator

Booker lockdown multiplayer

Condor is a low-cost gliding flight simulator that will run on your home computer, the latest version, Condor 2, has fabulous graphics, flight and environmental modelling. The best way to get an idea of what it can do is to look at the manufacturer's web site. You can fly on your alone or in a comp with others - the program manages the start, during the flight you can see the other participants flying around you, and real time scores can be viewed as you go around the task. Your strategy during the flight will closely match what you would do if you were flying it for real. A few members have got together on-line to fly during lockdown - we have flown XC from many UK sites and one fast but scary task on the ridges in Slovenia.



Do I need to be a solo pilot?

The good news is that you can start this sort of glider racing well before you go solo in a real glider. Unfortunately, you cannot go from zero experience to racing participant in five minutes, it helps if you know the basics of how to fly a glider. The program includes tutorials that will remind you how to fly a glider, and there are a number of tips for how to make life easy if you are learning, such as magic thermals and increasing the tow rope length for easy aerotows. It is also relatively easy for a more experienced remote pilot to "virtually" sit in the cockpit with you and offer advice, or alternatively, for you to sit in on a competition flight as a spectator.

How do I get started?

You need to buy and download the software. You don't need a fancy PC to take part, it's still fun flying with other pilots without the fancy graphics – you can turn them down. Having said

that, if you have a 15-year-old PC and very slow broadband it may not work too well for you. Ideally, rather than struggling with mouse and keyboard, you should buy a USB joystick to add a degree of realism. The joystick plugs in to your USB and is automatically recognised by Condor.

How do I join in with other pilots?

We have been flying short tasks (with simultaneous Zoom) on Monday and Thursday around 8pm, although this may run down as we start flying for real. To join a task you go to a web page that lists the available Condor servers, you click a button to join the task and hey presto, the task and weather are downloaded to your PC and Condor starts for you - there are some techie tips in this document. Of course, if you are flying with others you need to know when they will be there. We hope that, as in many other clubs, this winter we will run multiplayer tasks to a regular timetable and will advertise via the newsletter when they start.

International contests run year-round and you don't need a comp licence to enter, but of course you do need to know when these take place. Many of the <u>international competitions</u> now have better organisation and websites than our real life gliding comps and some are live streamed on YouTube.

Sounds fun, but will I learn anything?

Absolutely. Whilst there are few formal (BGA) training notes for simulators, most pilots would be able to come up with scenarios that could be learned and repeated - practice makes perfect. One example is that some pilots are flying with their Oudie connected for navigation and airspace, so they may have done twenty or more flights refamiliarising themselves, or learning the same kit that they will use in their gliders. Of course, there are limitations - perhaps in the future gliding instructors will also be spending time correcting the bad habits their students have learnt on a simulator.

Can it help if I cannot yet go gliding again?

If you are unable to fly during the current lockdown, consider using a simulator to learn something new, like ridge flying, understand more about thermal centring or to refresh some aspect of gliding such as approach control. Clearly it is not the same as doing it for real, but you may find that with someone else watching your flying on-line, and the ability to repeat immediately, you may get a much better understanding of some subjects. If you are interested in a demonstration, discussing what is possible, or joining the multiplayer sessions at any time in the future, then please get in touch with any of the following: Bob Smith, Henry Ross, Paul Clarke.

After lockdown

We hope to have an on-line Grand Prix season next winter when the real XC season ends – on days when it is not flyable outside of course.

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The Treasurer and coronavirus

What does the Treasurer get up to when we're all in lockdown, apart from hooning along the South Downs ridge virtually in Condor? Well I've been doing some C19 planning and execution. It's also what I've been spending most of my time at work doing for the last two months, so it is familiar to me. A gliding club's finances are very seasonal. We lose a lot of money in the winter and then make a profit in the summer and by the end of the financial year in September we just about break even in a good year. So, after a very wet few months up to March where flying revenue was very limited, we were confronted with no flying revenue at all during the lockdown. By the time you read this we should be flying solo again, but a significant part of our activity is flying for training courses and trial lessons which involve two people in a glider with limited opportunity to socially distance and we will clearly not have any revenue from this in the short term. I hope that we will be able to restart dual flying before the end of the summer and get back up to full operational activity levels as soon as customers are comfortable to come and fly dual.

So how do we balance the books? Fortunately, the government has sprung into action remarkably quickly and the committee has done the same. We have sadly had to let two staff members go and we have furloughed all of the others under the government's job retention scheme and I have applied for and received the grant for this. I have also applied for and received rates relief, worth £5,000, and a Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant of £25,000. This will keep us going for the moment and the committee and I will keep working on the health of the club as we return to flying.

John Otty - Treasurer

Northside update

The Council has assured us that it is pressing ahead with detailed design of the Northside take off strip, but inevitably the Covid-19 emergency has slowed things. An important outstanding matter is a noise report for the intended power circuit to the south of the airfield until general aviation resumes the measurements needed for this can't be taken, and as a result the planning application for the project cannot be submitted. In the meantime the Council's project manager is exploring whether it is possible to carry out some of the preparatory ground works in advance to try and reduce the delay.

The Council has also been in discussion with Sir Francis Dashwood in connection with the use of the field at the northern edge of the aerodrome, and we are told that those negotiations are progressing well.

The Council hasn't provided an updated timetable for this project, and with the current uncertainties probably can't, but it's good to see that work on it continues as it best can.

Robert Turner

Airspace update

Don't forget that the new airspace around Lasham and Farnborough is now active. If you haven't already done so, don't forget to update your navigation devices with the latest airspace files. Other recent changes to airspace files are the addition of Sywell ILS feathers and deletion of Old Sarum ATZ. If you updated your devices early in the year (for Denbigh expedition) you may want to update again for these changes.

Up to date files can be downloaded from the <u>Navboys website</u>, or you can create your own using <u>AsSelect</u>.

Three men went to mow......



....went to mow the wildflower meadow which is our trailer park at Booker. Many thanks to Jeremy Gilbey, Rob Turner and David Lowe for their hard work in restoring the area after its prolonged lay-off.



The flying operation is temporarily based at Chiltern Park while Wycombe Air Park is closed

The office remains closed

We will resume normal operations as soon as possible.

If you would like to join the Booker GC Whatsapp Group, please contact CFI Richard Crockett cfi@bookergliding.co.uk.

If you have any comments or questions about the club's current situation, you can contact Chairman Symeon Economou chairman@bookergliding.co.uk

Dates for your diary (subject to change)

2020

18th – 24th April: Instructor Training Week - postponed

25th / 26th April: Easter Egg Cup aerobatics comp - postponed

23rd – 31st May: Flying Start course - postponed

11th - 13th June: Aero Expo cancelled

6th – 21st June: Summer expedition – postponed to 2021

11th – 19th July: Booker Regionals and Flying Festival

25th / 26th July: Inter Club Leagues – Booker leg

29th / 30th August: Whispering Wardrobes vintage weekend

2nd / 3rd October: Elite London – new date

10th – 25th October: Aboyne expedition
 21st November: Awards Evening

19th December: Members' Christmas party

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Club Communications

We use a Yahoo email group, which we encourage all members to subscribe to, in order to provide a quick way to communicate with the membership. We also use WhatsApp. Details are below.

Booker GC Forum – Open to all members to participate. The Forum provides the opportunity to share ideas about the Club. Send an email to: bookergc-forum-subscribe@yahoogroups.com and include your name and membership number when applying.

Booker GC Expeditions – This group has been replaced by Whatsapp groups set up in the run up to each expedition.

Booker GC X-C – This has been replaced by a Whatsapp group administered by the CFI, John Otty, Tim Scott, Jim White, Bob Smith, Jane Moore

Booker GC Instructors - This has been replaced by a Whatsapp group administered by the CFI.

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

http://bookergc.blogspot.com/ and https://www.facebook.com/bookerglidingclub

*** 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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