

CFI message May 2011

Dear all

Annual Flight Review (AFR)

It's that time of the year again where you will be due your Annual Flight Review at some point over the next 6 months.

As before, a tracking sheet with who and when is due their AFR will be issued. It will be available on "CFI corner" on the website and on the board opposite the office.

Please ensure you do your AFR in time. I don't want pilots flying solo/P1 after their due date.

I have changed the syllabus a little making it a bit more specific. My intension is to change it slightly each year so that you cover different exercises over a greater period of time.

However if there is anything you want specifically to cover then please discuss with your Instructor.

The AFR consist of one soaring flight minimum.

- Launch fee only – make sure log sheet is annotated otherwise you will have to pay soaring

The AFR is applicable to all solo pilots (excluding Instructors) for full and country members.

Any Bronze C test, currency check, Friends/Family check, coach check etc all count as an AFR so long as the minimum syllabus requirements are met and the form has been completed.

Country members

For all country members we will obviously accept any annual review/check you do at your home club, however I will need you to provide a date of your last check or when it is due, for our records.

Please help with this small piece of admin by either sending me or Liz in the office your last review/check date

Pilot Fatigue

At the AGM Peter Saundby talked about fatigue relating to Bo's workload. A combination of good weather and strong bookings can make a tiring week. But this is not exclusive to Bo. Think about yourself. Ask your self the following before you fly:

- How busy a week have I had leading up to my flying at the weekend?
- Did I get consistently good night's sleep during the week?
- Have I just driven a long way to get to the club?
- How rested do I feel before I fly?
- How demanding do I expect the flying to be?
- All are factors that contribute to your fatigue and alertness.

We have had at least one incident with aircraft damage that I could include pilot fatigue as a factor. Excerpt from my incident log:

Worked a long week (>45+ hours), hadn't slept very well due to the pressures of work.

Flew to relax and switch off.

Had a long flight. Admitted tired, not alert and switched off. Subsequent poor landing damaged glider

If you are a tug pilot or instructor also be mindful of the amount of flying you do on the day.

As a rough guide but it does vary by individual

Tug Pilots

- Max 15 - 20 launches before taking a break – even then that is pushing it. You know yourself

Instructors

- Over 6 soaring instruction flights in a day are pushing it. Take a break after at least 3 or 4 but again you know yourself

Although we all use our flying to enjoy ourselves and switch off from work etc we must be mindful of how fit and alert we are. Be honest with yourself – if you don't think you are up for it then don't fly or reduce what you were planning to do.

Correctly rig the glider

There have been recent increases in the national accident rate relating to glider rigging problems that have manifested themselves in flight. One of those ended in a fatality.

Don't let it be you.

- Make sure you know how to rig your glider properly
- Don't let yourself be distracted
- Always do positive control checks and if possible have someone else check them independently.

All sensible stuff and yet pilots still manage to get airborne with an incorrectly rigged glider

Another towing incident

This is the fourth such incident at our club in the last 9 months.

In this case the glider was being towed back to the trailer park having landed west. The P1 on the wingtip (no one on the nose) i don't think was paying as much attention as he could have.

In the meantime the car driver took the combination a bit too close to the trailers parked along the picnic area fence.

Things then started to un-ravel quite quickly as the glider wing hit one of the trailers, not on the tip but about half way along the wing.

The other wing tip was knocked out of pilots hand and starts to rotate round the trailer until a stop was called (not by the pilot)

Fortunately there was no damage but it is another example of where we all need to be awake and vigilant at all times.

Wing runner

Before you launch – who is going to run your wing?

There was a recent potential incident that highlights how easy it could be for it all to go wrong if the wing tip runner doesn't know what they are doing.

The following is an excerpt from my incident log.

Pre-Bronze pilot very new to type. Inexperienced (if any experience) 'helper' who ran the wing. He managed to hold back the wing creating significant swing. P1 did well to recover so no harm done but it was avoidable and could have gone wrong quickly. Turns out the wing tip runner had never been briefed or done it before? I was alarmed as if it had gone wrong then my glider being rigged could have been hit.

This sort of incident is avoidable

- Make sure the wing tip runner knows what to do – if you as P1 are not sure then don't launch
- If running the tip – only ever hold the wing by the trailing edge and allow the wing to pull free from you hand as the glider accelerates away; never hold the leading edge as you will drag the tip back and cause the glider to swing.
- As P1 if you are not happy with who is running your wing or how they are about to hold it or don't have at least 45degrees either side of your launch run clear of obstructions – don't launch!

Clear the airfield

Do make every effort to clear the runway after landing as soon as possible. Likewise make sure a glider is cleared off as soon as possible. There are too many occasions where everyone looks on at the stranded glider but no does anything about it!.

There was a recent example where the glider and tow car sat in the middle of the runway assuming the tug could land past them – it couldn't but the combination didn't realize until the tug had done its third circuit holding off waiting for them to move using expensive fuel un-necessarily.

- If there is sufficient time move the glider and car to the nearest safe area. That might be the North side of the airfield for instance.
- If it is a glider (or tug) and you don't have time to move the combination, turn you glider side on to the landing area, put the wing tip down (landing pilot knows you have seen them) and make sure the tow car is moved in line to keep the least cross section to the landing traffic.

Airspace

Keeping out of controlled airspace is an import part of our flying. The BGA are treating the subject very seriously.

We are lucky in not having that much to concern ourselves with which can make us complacent.

The following is an excerpt from my incident reporting log which you may recall I put out on the forum at the time:

One of our pilots recently owned up and I'd like to thank him for his honesty by admitting his accidental stray into the airway due to a 'senior moment'; we all have them.

It is a credit to the pilot that he has recognized his error and effectively penalized his mistake by removing himself from any opportunity for the 2010 Tony Burton trophy. It does however reinforce the point; wandering into airspace is serious – please avoid doing so at all costs (unless it is directly related to safety).

The pilot is a very experienced and respected club pilot and yet even he can make the mistake. Please learn from this and do all you can to make sure you don't do the same.

Unfortunately there are some very loud voices out there who want to restrict our sport by limiting the airspace available; any violation of airspace, however minor, just provides further ammunition for their cause.

Please treat airspace as seriously as any other aspect of our flying. Make sure you fly with an up to date chart, know how to read it and know where our local airspace boundaries are and the NOTAMS

Please also take the time to read the latest BGA communication on the subject.

Airspace

- **Know where you are!**
- **Carry an up to date chart**
- **Make sure you know before set off cross country**
- **Check NOTAMS / RA(T)'s – restricted airspace; it is your responsibility**

Look after the Kit and the kit will look after you!

Thanks to Tony C for helping with the guidance notes below

Hangar rash/Daily Inspections/reporting

The last 6 months has seen a significant increase in hangar rash.

We all accept hangar rash type accidents will happen but not at the rate we are experiencing at the moment. Examples being:

T10 – several dings culminating in a hole punched into the leading edge at the tip – total cost £1000

K21 – get coat damage on tip and near port root (parachute buckle?)

I have two issues with this

1. Most are avoidable - more care and attention required by the packers/unpackers
2. No one appears to be reporting

Putting in / taking out of hangar

- Minimum where possible of three pilots per glider
- Visitors are not to get involved unless supervised
- Make sure there is only one P1 giving direction
- Keep your eyes open not only for what the glider might run into but also what you might trip over

Correct dollies used

- Specific ones are clearly marked up – use them

DON'T regard hangar packing as a social event – it's not.

- Don't chat to each other when pushing gliders around – pay attention to the particular corner of the aircraft nearest to you and make sure it's not going to come into contact with anything.

DO shout stop

- if you think something is about to make contact. As you know aircraft are very strong in the air but very delicate on the ground.

DO move the aircraft around the inside of the hangar slowly.

DO take special care with the tug.

- It requires a minimum of three people to move it.
- One on each wing pushing or pulling on the outboard section of the main strut and one person (usually the tuggie) on one of the handles at the rear. The person at the rear cannot see the wing tips very easily.
- The BIG problem with moving the tug is that if the tug is turned using the handles at the back it pivots on the inner wheel of the turn which is set forwards of the wing so the outer wing tip describes an arc greater than the length of the wing.
- In other words the outer wing tip moves outwards while it turns.

Don't rush the packing

- There has been a recent incident between the tug and K13. It was mid week with limited number of bods to help and it was raining. Things became rushed and the tug went into the glider
- Rushing to put the kit away was cited as being a major reason for the incident
- Take more care and allow more time where possible

A more standard hangar packing plan is being investigated

Daily Inspections

With immediate effect only:

- **Bronze C or above** can only do the DI
- **Only BMGC members**, no visiting pilots.
- Not just a quick look over but a **thorough daily inspection**
 - The daily inspection is the key time each day to spot any problems
 - Recently demonstrated with the Junior Tailplane which appears to have been missed for some time until a thorough inspection picked it up

Eventually we will come up with a sign off scheme to allow pre-bronze to do DI's

Flying the glider for the first time that day

Before you take over any glider as P1 have a quick walk round of the glider you are just about to fly as P1 before you fly it – just to make sure the basics are good to go. It is also good airmanship

We are also then aligned with recent changes to the BGA recommended practice.

Reporting

I believe as a club we don't have that great a reporting culture. You as members need to report more. Don't just leave it thinking no one will notice or 'someone else' will do it.

Any reporting will be treated in-confidence. If a glider is damaged then make sure it is in the DI book and reported to the Duty Instructor, Keith Richards or me.

These changes might increase the finding and reporting of any dings. As Peter Saundby recently pointed out "*While an accident can happen to anyone, a failure to recognise and report aircraft damage is a serious safety issue*".

General – club glider care

- Canopies cleaned at the beginning of every day
- Canopy covers – must go on at end of every day
- Parachutes must be removed and stored away each day

Washing gliders

We are all guilty of putting glider away muddy. This is not acceptable. The mud gradually eats away at the fabric/paint/steel eventually causing damage requiring repair which incurs expense which you ultimately pay for Keith's basic advice, unless it is below freezing is two buckets of water and a brush will get rid of the worst

In the summer the gliders are generally cleaner but accrue a layer of dust. Don't let this build up – clean it

General Advice/Guidance

Thermalling Etiquette

As the season has got started I thought I would remind you about thermal soaring 'etiquette' and rules. These are available on page 58 of 'Laws and Rules'.

We are all used to the rules regarding ridge soaring but those listed below are as equally important for Thermal soaring.

Joining

- Glider already established in thermal has right of way
- All to circle in same direction as any glider already established in same area of lift
- If gliders are thermalling in opposite direction – joining glider shall turn same direction as nearest (vertically)

- Entry to the turn done so that you can keep visual contact with all of the other gliders at or near your planned entry height
- Enter at a tangent to the circle so that other gliders already established do not have to manoeuvre out of the way

Sharing

- Pilots should adhere to see and be seen. Don't position yourself in the thermal in such a way that other pilots sharing the thermal cannot see you
- When at a similar level never turn inside, point at or ahead of another glider unless you intend to overtake and can guarantee safe separation
- Leave thermal if you think you can't keep safe separation
- Look out – inside but also outside of thermal for other gliders that might join

Leaving a thermal

- Look outside the turn and behind before straightening
- Do not manoeuvre sharply unless clear of other gliders

Landing out

Please read the attached guidance and information from the BGA. Some very useful basic tips

<http://www.glidering.co.uk/bgainfo/competitions/fieldlanding.htm>

Work load

- Be careful not to get distracted especially if the workload is building because of strong sink or poor fields. Make the decision early and select a good field in good time.
- Don't leave it too late – just because you can soar away from a 1000' near the airfield don't assume this is the case when you are looking at a field landing where the pressure is much greater.

Which runway in a Northerly?

It sometimes can be difficult to decide between landing East or West in a light northerly, especially if your glider has high energy and/or weaker brakes.

You obviously have to decide at the time, taking into consideration the nominated preferred landing direction at briefing. However as a general guide landing East is preferable even if you have a small tail wind component, due to the lack of obstacles on the undershoot (no hedge, assuming the electric fence is not up) which allows for the reference point to be much closer to the threshold giving you more landing area and an uphill slope.

Aerotow - 'Tug upsets'

A tug upset is where the glider gets too high causing the tug to have un-commanded pitch nose down. It can happen very rapidly and if this occurs, especially with in the first 1000'+ above ground, it could have very serious consequences as the tug pilot might not have sufficient height to react and subsequently recover.

For us, 1000'+ above ground level could mean the whole launch as we often tow towards rising ground. It is therefore very important that you maintain the correct tow position and certainly **do not get too high**.

If you ever lose sight of the tug must release every time.

The last BMGC tug upset I know of was at least 20 years ago. None of us want a repeat

So as a reminder to find and maintain the correct tow position:

- Just as the rope goes tight note the position in the canopy of the tug – that will give you your initial tow position.
- Once airborne maintain a safe height above the ground with careful use of the elevator until the tug is airborne.
- Do not allow the glider to get any more than about 6 -10' above the ground or about the height of GAZPA's fin
- Once the combination is at a safe height 'recalibrate' by going down on to the tug slipstream and then gently bring the glider back up into the smooth air. Maintain that position with the elevator.
- Note the position of the tug in the canopy. That is the correct tow position.
- Remember to re-trim

Do that each time you launch. It works for any combination for glider, tug and tow rope length. If you have never practiced this technique then one of the instructors would be only too pleased to demonstrate it to you.

In addition watch our Aerotow training video as a reminder.

http://www.blackmountainsgliding.co.uk/vid_aerotow.php

Conversion onto a new glider type

As minimum do not consider yourself to be converted onto a new glider type until you have completed at least the following:

- Until you have completed the conversion do not go cross country or out of gliding range of the airfield (therefore risking a field landing)
 - 10 flights and 10 hours on type
 - Solo stall & spin symptoms, recognition and recovery (check the flight manual to confirm the recovery actions and if the type is cleared for spinning)

Tow car incidents

Just as much care and attention is required when operating airside, especially in close proximity to gliders and people as is required when we fly. As basic guidance:

- Do not take the tow vehicle to within 2-3 meters of any part of the glider
- If the rope is not long enough, move the glider to the tow vehicle wherever possible
- Don't move the glider until the tow vehicle is stationary
- Always drive the tow vehicle with windows open to hear any instructions
- P1 of the glider is responsible for the whole combination. He/she also has the best overview.
- Be very careful when towing the glider into the launch point where there are likely to be people congregated

Club fleet – 50 hour checks

We are a little more unique in the country by having much higher than average soaring time which is good of course. However for the club fleet it means the 50 hour check comes round much sooner, around five times a year.

Thanks to Peter Saundby the hours are monitored and a notification placed in the glider when 50 hour is due. This cannot be ignored. The glider cannot fly until the 50 hour check is complete. Please ensure it is done.

Recently both K13's were found to have been well over with the Junior at 90 hours. I know Peter did his bit so what happened after that?

Thanks to John Clark and team for doing the last checks a couple of weekends ago.

Managing the North West Launch Point

When we are busy and launching from the NW corner it can get quite congested at the launch point. To help prevent this and allow for a smoother launch rate from now on we will organize the launch queue and take off run adjacent to the hedge with gliders moved into place as per the blue arrows in the diagram below. The operation should be a lot more effective and alleviate congestion.

Before any launch remember to check that you have at least a clear path of at least 45 degrees either side of your take off run.

