

FINALLY

We hope this booklet will have given you some ideas about where your gliding can take you and about how the BGA can help you to meet your ambitions. It only remains to repeat the advice given earlier – be safe and have fun.



Chief Executive



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Next Steps in Gliding - You and the BGA



British Gliding Association



Congratulations on your first solo flight in a glider.

Everybody remembers their first solo and we hope that the memories will stay with you throughout your gliding career. However, we like to think of the first solo not as an end in itself but the start of what will be a lifetime of participation, learning and achievement.

Gliding is a sport that can take you in many directions according to your own interests and desires. Some of these possible paths are explored in more detail below.

The British Gliding Association, the sport's national governing body, exists to help you get the most out of gliding by providing the framework within which the sport is organised. The BGA's role and activities and what it can do for you are described towards the end of this booklet.

Wherever your gliding takes you, we at the BGA hope that you will enjoy it and that you will find it an exhilarating, challenging and satisfying sport.

NEXT STEPS

The BGA encourages you to continue to develop your gliding skills and will do everything it can to help you achieve whatever goals you set yourself.

Your next target will probably be your Bronze Badge, followed by the BGA Cross Country Endorsement. Full details of what is required for these are in Laws & Rules (if you haven't got a copy, you should get one without delay as knowledge of the contents is needed for the Bronze Badge written test). Basically, however, the Bronze Badge and Cross Country Endorsement build upon what you have learned to date, adding airmanship and the skills that you will need to fly cross country. Once you have these qualifications, you have reached a level equivalent to a licensed pilot and can really start going places!

One of the great attractions of gliding is that it can be whatever you want it to be.

Many pilots are content simply to fly to around their club site. This can offer tremendous pleasure and many challenges are still available to the local pilot - the satisfaction of perfecting one's technique, high climbs, and the peace and tranquillity of motor-less flight throughout the year. The social aspects of local soaring are also well known!

For many pilots, however, flying cross country *is* gliding. There is the anticipation in the planning, setting yourself a route that takes account of the weather expected, the terrain, and your capabilities, using the new skills that you will have learned. Then there is the tension, waiting to see if conditions will match what you expected and then, if all goes to plan, there is the satisfaction of launching, knowing that you have prepared for the flight as well as possible. There follows the challenge of completing your task and, perhaps, pushing yourself and your glider further or faster than you have ever gone before. During the flight you will probably experience highs and lows – the satisfaction of soaring high and flying quickly through good weather, the delight at the countryside you are seeing, and, equally, the frustration of not being able to make a good climb, having to abandon the task or, even, landing in a field. Even a field landing is not a disaster though: although you may have failed to achieve everything you set out to do, you will usually find welcoming farmers and you will enjoy the camaraderie of your retrieve crew.

There are always new things to learn about cross country

flying as being a good cross country pilot involves knowledge of the weather, of navigation, increasingly of the various advances in cockpit technology available to glider pilots and, of course, of you and your glider.

Many BGA clubs run special cross country courses - open to all - to help you get to this stage and the BGA has introduced a number of coaching initiatives to assist clubs in nurturing and developing their cross country pilots.

Early in your cross country career, you will look to complete your Silver badge. This internationally recognised qualification, amongst other things, allows you to enter competitions and, with your CFI's approval, to train to be an instructor yourself.

It really is up to you which direction your gliding takes you. In addition to the challenges and rewards of cross country gliding, you may wish to test yourself against your peers by flying in competitions. Competitions are held throughout the UK at all levels. A good place to start might be to fly in the novice class in your local inter-club league. From there, you can progress through the levels into regional and national competitions. Who knows, one day you might even become a member of the British team, currently the most successful in the world. Don't think that competitive gliding is a deadly serious business – the social side of it plays almost as large a part as the racing.

Even if you are not interested in competing, you can get great pleasure and gain new experience from visiting other clubs around the country or, even, around the world. If you fly at a flatland site, why not consider visiting a club in hilly or mountainous regions to experience flying in ridge lift or in wave? Southern hemisphere sites, particularly in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa are popular in their summer months for those seeking winter thermals. Wherever you go, you are sure to receive a warm welcome from others who share your passion.

Many pilots gain immense satisfaction from instructing. With your Silver badge and 50 hours P1 time you can consider qualifying as a BGA Basic Instructor. With experience and further training you can then progress through the instructor ranks.

An increasing number of pilots are experiencing the thrill that precision glider aerobatics offer. Again, as with most things in gliding, you can start with simple manoeuvres and work your way up.

You may find your club's single seat and dual control gliders sufficient for you needs. At some point, however, it is possible that you will want to get your own glider. This need not be too daunting a financial proposition. Second hand gliders can be bought for as little as a couple of thousand pounds and many glider pilots form a syndicate of two or three friends to share a glider and its costs. Running costs are also reasonable as long as you are prepared to do most of the routine maintenance work yourself. Most people who have their own gliders find that it works it out more cost effective than using club aircraft, especially if you are putting in lots of cross country hours.

Hopefully, the above will have given you a flavour of where you can go with gliding. It is totally up to which direction your gliding takes you and, whatever path you follow, we hope that the sport will give you many years of pleasure and challenge. However, whichever way your gliding takes you, there are two things that should take precedence over everything – be safe and have fun.



THE BGA

As a member of your local club, you are automatically affiliated to the British Gliding Association (the BGA). The BGA has been the sport's governing body in the UK for over 75 years and, as a member of the Royal Aero Club, the Federation Aeronautique Internationale (FAI), the European Gliding Union and Europe Air Sports, represents the interests of gliding in the international arena.

Since the formation of the BGA, gliding in the UK has been self governing, allowing the sport to develop and thrive without many of the restrictions that surround private aviation in other parts of the world. Recent changes in European legislation have, and continue to, threaten many of our freedoms. The BGA has taken a leading role in fighting for changes to proposed legislation to ensure that tomorrow's pilots can continue to enjoy their sport in an environment that is not unnecessarily burdened with legislation and unwarranted procedures and the associated costs, whilst maintaining appropriate levels of safety through its Safety Management System.

However, this is only one aspect of the BGA's role. The Association is deeply involved in all aspects of the sport. The following aims to give you a brief overview of the BGA's aims and objectives.

In providing national leadership of the sport, we represent the views of individual glider pilots and clubs externally, in particular with the Government, the European Commission, local government, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and Euro-Control, the pan European body responsible for airspace planning.

Under existing delegations, we set and monitor standards of club operations, instruction, and safety. You will have followed the BGA pre-solo syllabus in your training and been taught by instructors who, themselves, have been trained to BGA instructing standards.

The UK is the leading nation in international gliding competition and the BGA provides the framework in which our teams train, are selected and compete. Our coaching programme is the envy of the world and there is a particular emphasis on the training of up and coming junior pilots – evidenced by the fact that the last three world junior champions have all been from the UK.

Safety is integral to every aspect of our operations, from instructor training through to the supervision of airworthiness standards for the UK glider fleet. This last, vital, issue is achieved through our team of highly qualified BGA inspectors, directed by our Chief Technical Officer.

We work to increase participation and, to this end, market and promote the sport and assist clubs in doing the same within their catchment areas. We also seek to establish and communicate best practice within clubs to help ensure that individual pilots receive every encouragement to take up and continue to develop within the sport.

The BGA is a source of knowledge, advice and assistance for clubs and pilots. We work to ensure that this knowledge is made available as effectively as possible.

More details of the BGA's role can be found in the document "Strategic Aims & Objectives" which is available for download from the BGA web site.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

The BGA aims to inform all pilots about issues that affect them. This information is made available in a number of ways, the principal among these being:

The BGA web site—www.gliding.co.uk. This is the principal repository of information. It is structured into various sections, including Safety, Technical, Competitions, and Legislation. The site is also a major source of the latest news.

Email Alerts. All pilots can sign up to receive Email alerts telling them of the latest news as it happens. You can specify which subject areas you wish to be alerted on. You can sign up and maintain your preferences via the BGA web site.

The Newsletter. This monthly publication gives an overview of the main news items from the past month. You can have your own copy delivered directly to you via Email – sign up via the BGA web site.

Sailplane & Gliding. The BGA's bi-monthly publication is arguably the best gliding magazine in the world. It provides in-depth analysis of issues facing gliding, gliding related features, sailplane reviews, superb photography and much more. You can subscribe to *Sailplane & Gliding* either by contacting the office or through the web site..

In addition, the BGA holds an annual conference which is open to all pilots. The programme varies from year to year but there will always be something of interest to all pilots.

Of course, there may be occasions where you have a particular information need that isn't met by any of the above. If so, you can contact the office and your query will be passed to the most appropriate person.

BGA ORGANISATION

The direction of the BGA is led by an elected Executive Committee, comprising 12 members, all of whom are active glider pilots. The Executive Committee is responsible for overall strategies, policies and direction.

The Executive Committee is supported by various sub-committees and working groups, each of which is responsible to the Executive Committee for various aspects of the sport:

- Safety
- Instructors and Coaching
- Technical
- Airspace
- Competitions and Awards
- Development
- Marketing & Communications
- Regulatory
- Strategic Planning & Finance
- Staff & Administration

These teams are supported by a small professional staff, led by the Chief Executive. Much of the policy formulation work and management of specific work programmes is carried out through the subcommittees, working groups, by individual employees or contractors and by individual volunteers.