

What's Up?



The Leinster Gliding Centre Newsletter

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A Welcome from our Chairman

I believe it was Aristotle who came up with the theory that everything around us is made of earth, water, air and fire. Well, thankfully, we've been spared the fire in these parts, but the volume of water falling abundantly through the air has left us all too often adhered to the earth in what the calendar unilaterally declared "summer".

We can control much but not the weather. I have researched various witchcraft techniques, and they speak of burning maps with candles, which really has left me most unconvinced! For those of us who could come out on days that don't start with an "S", there was some reasonable flying achieved. Indeed,

some of our newer members who joined in the spring now have 10, 15 or even 20 flights in the logbook, so a massive well done to you all.

I want to thank the tug pilots, instructors and duty pilots who have so often, on rainy, windy days, hung on in the hope of a weather window opening later in the day. Frequently such miracles do happen, even on days that started off as total write-offs, allowing us to start flying. Much of my own flying over July and August was in such weather windows – indeed, I've had some terrific local soaring flights in these gaps. Perseverance paid off!

The Active Wicklow event in August saw a number of first-time pilots experience gliding. Once again, the weather at the start of the day was truly awful. However, following a downpour, conditions improved

A Welcome from our Chairman (contd)

dramatically and resulted in terrific soaring for both the Active Wicklow participants and club members. All in all, a roaring success so, again, thanks to all those who made it happen and didn't allow the soggy start to dampen spirits.



As part of our continuous training program, we have several newly commissioned IFPs among our ranks and they have been introducing people to our world of silent flight over recent months. Congratulations to them all on their new rating. Theirs is a vital part of promoting our sport by introducing future pilots to our world of silent flight.

The final week of September saw the annual Gliding Safari set off for the Dingle Peninsula, a tradition that goes back almost 50 years.

An LGC delegation attended the Transition Year 2023 Show at the Sport Ireland campus on Sept 26th. Our objective was to let attendees know that gliding exists here and represents a tremendous gateway to a career in aviation - apart from being an enormously rewarding sport. Our attendance was greatly appreciated by the organisers as well as the students and teachers who

attended. Feedback both on the day and since has been very positive and I must express my sincere gratitude to PJ, Damien, Stevie and Colin Hadden for agreeing to a very early start so as to have everything set up and ready on the day. Further thanks to my syndicate partners for agreeing to the use of MG as the static display aircraft, which made a big impact.



The monthly Club Socials were kept going throughout the summer months. Even on days where there was no flying activity, we kept the social side of things happening and who could forget Damien and Michael who battled a biblical flood to ensure 20+ people left with full tummies and smiling faces. Terrific craic was had, guitars were strummed and paella was devoured.

So, all in all, it was a busy few months and the one thing we *can* say about Summer 2023 is that we did make the best of it!

LGC Travel Feature:

Kevin Houlihan - Namibia Adventure

Part 1



Kevin began his gliding career at the Dublin Gliding Club in 1981, went solo in 1982 and became an Instructor in 1983. He has also served as the DGC Chief Flying Instructor.

A retired solicitor, Kevin has many records under his belt including the only glider pilot to have flown 500kms in Ireland. He has also the only pilot to have flown between LGC and the Ulster Gliding club – in both directions. Given the conditions this year, these look like a particularly impressive feats!!

Location. Namibia is in the south-western part of the African Continent, next country up from South Africa and straddling the Tropic of Capricorn.

If you have a look at Africa on Google Earth you will see a green swath, the Equatorial Forest, across most of the middle of the Continent. Top & bottom are deserts, the Sahara to the north and the Kalahari



to the south. Unlike our Lawrence of Arabia image of the golden rolling empty dunes of the Sahara, the Kalahari is almost totally flat with red sand covered with thorn trees, brush, grasses and termite mounds up to 2 m tall. It is sometimes referred to as Savannah.

Whatever you call it, it is totally unlandable. It covers almost all of Namibia and neighbouring Botswana, and a little finger of South Africa poking up between the two, which I will mention later. There's a spine of mountain running north/south

on the west side, again totally unlandable, and beyond that the Namib desert, a proper one with golden sand dunes. Many ships came to grief along that stretch



which is known as the Skeleton Coast.

Conditions. The clue is desert. Add in an average elevation of c. 1140 m asl and the result - hot, dry, sandy. Temperatures when I was there ranged from 38°-42°C and that was November, so not



yet mid-Summer. Bar one day (in three visits) there

Namibian Adventure (contd)



A view over the savannah

was no rain and hadn't been for 3 years previously. There can be thunderstorms but any rain is generally re-absorbed into the air before it hits the ground. The lightning however does trigger bush fires. Animals, both wild and domestic, were dying in large numbers. Vultures were thriving!

Getting there. Air Namibia operated an overnight service from Frankfurt to Windhoek. It was a comfortable 10 hour flight aboard an Airbus A340-300. It went into liquidation in 2021, unfortunately, and it seems that getting there now would involve several carriers, multiple stops and take from 18 to 26 hours. May as well go to Australia! However, as Namibia is almost directly due south, there is no jet lag. As you leave the airport the first thing you notice (apart from the heat) are monkeys along the sides of the road. These have discovered that food is plentiful there as travellers throw stuff out of cars

as they near the airport. Like the Dublin foxes, troupes of them have become urbanised. As civilization recedes, so the monkeys disappear into their normal habitats but can still be spotted along with giraffe, zebra, warthogs, wildebeest, springbok and numerous bird species including ostrich. Outside Dordabis, a kind of a shanty village along the way, are loads of ginnets - previously used for work but, since the arrival of tractors, now just turned loose.

Gliding Centres. All gliding takes place from 4 centres relatively close to each other. All are within a 3 hour drive south from Windhoek – over half of which will have you bouncing down gravel tracks!

Bitterwasser is the original and biggest, operating from a roughly circular salt pan almost 3 kms in diameter. Off the north of the pan there is a 1600m runway,



The rough conditions encountered at the Lodge

27/09, and an 800m safety runway, 01/19, for the rare times the pan might be too soft after rain. These re-

Namibian Adventure (contd)



Spot the landing area...

serve runways make Kilrush look impossibly small! However, normally the pan is like concrete and runways up to 2.8kms are available. You could actually take off or land in any direction but for safe operations they have nominal runway headings and a designated runway (or parallel runways) for the day depending on wind direction. However, gliders do line up six abreast for take-off!

Kiripotib is the most northerly centre. This is actually a game lodge and some years ago Ludwig Starkle and Wolfgang Janowitsch agreed to set up a gliding operation there on the off season for hunting – the high season for gliding! A win win situation. Runways, hangars and workshops were established and visiting pilots used the chalets, bar & restaurant already there for the hunters. The main runway is roughly east/west just over 1700 mts long and 80 mts wide. Open class gliders can take-off/land two abreast. A cross runway, much the same length but a bit narrower, runs roughly north/south. Take offs are generally from the lodge end heading west. The vegetation has been cleared from the sides of the adjoining

road which can be used to land on if necessary. To the north, a salt pan gives a 700 mtr bolt hole if a takeoff goes to worms.



A Promising sky....

Pokweni is to the southwest of Kiripotib. This is a small operation which, like Bitterwasser, uses a salt pan but this time only 800mts at best, and a runway 50 mts wide and c. 2.4 km long including a bit of the pan, 1.8km without. I have not been there and don't know much more about it. I see that they are currently lying 6th overall in OLC Airfields with over a quarter of a million kms flown from there last season.

Namibian Adventure (contd)

Veronica is the newest operation, again set up on a game lodge. Bernd Dolba, who was CFI in Kiripotib for several years and had some disagreement with the owners, agreed to run this new



Some of the neighbours

centre. And new it was! He met with the lodge owners around Easter and by November two new runways in a V, the longer being 2kms, and a third spur in between (created when the workers started off in the wrong direction but left there as a handy emergency landing strip) had been hacked out of the wilderness. In addition, a brand new hangar, workshop and office had been built and awaited the first pilots! Veronica is the closest to Gobabis which is generally an advantage for the 'coalmining' leg – more later!

Facilities. “What’s for dinner” someone asked. “Whatever strays onto the runways!” was the retort. Not entirely true of course as game needs to be hung. But we would probably be eating its cousin, unlucky to have made that fatal mistake some weeks earlier. Game was the meat most evenings, usually of the antelope variety, with home bred chicken, beef from the farm or fish for variety. In fact we ate very well. Guests got the choice cuts, garnished with a variety of vegetables and various styles of potatoes

and pasta. Soups, desserts, home-made cakes and breads and a well stocked bar made each evening a culinary delight. Breakfasts and lunches were to the same high standard. Packed lunches were available for those flying or you could make a sandwich out of the breakfast fare and bring it with you. Morning coffee and afternoon tea, both with a selection of cakes, was on offer for those who weren't. Rooms were air conditioned, en-suite with comfortable beds protected by mosquito nets. The rooms were not entirely critter proof, however, and you could wake to find some class of lizard looking at you with one eye. It was important to check boots for scorpions! Swimming pools and sun-loungers rounded off the facilities.



Savanah Sundowners

There was usually at least one 'Sundowner' where we all piled into safari jeeps, had a bit of a look at the wildlife and ended up at a clearing where the staff had drinks and finger food ready. A nice experience.

To be continued in the next edition of the LGC Newsletter



LGC Member's Story:

Mick Shannon - Introductory Flight Pilot



Mick was given a DGC flight voucher in 2016, did an introductory flight with Martin McHugh and loved it. After completing 13 flights as a 3-month member, he became a full member and in 2018, went solo. Mick completed his Sail Plane License (SPL) in 2020 and obtained his Silver C in 2021. During this time, he purchased a share of a Mucha glider but has since sold it, as it was stored at the Ulster Gliding Club near Coleraine. Mick works in IT in Naas, so can keep an envious eye on those of us lucky enough to be able to fly on Wednesdays.

Having qualified recently as an Introductory Flight pilot (IFP), I was asked to write a few words about the experience. Thanks Brian here goes!!

I decided last year that I would like to train to become an IFP so in February 2023, I approached Cecily Begley, our Chief Flying Instructor, for direction. I had missed out on the previous round of training the year before when Walt, Ron and Owen successfully completed the program.

Cecily introduced me to the IFP modules and training videos. As part of the program, Garda vetted and Safeguarding 1 are required. As I started on the program, there was one scary phrase that presented itself - "The Patter". This is where you talk to your student about the glider's controls and the importance of keeping a constant lookout for other aircraft. Like many things, it seems easy, but it is quite difficult to perfect. I found myself talking out loud as I drove, and I nearly sent Eleanor, my wife, mad talking about looking towards the horizon for other aircraft, how to use a parachute and a multitude of other items. The course covers many subjects including ground handling and safety, parachute demonstrations, cockpit layout and controls, and safety at the launch point.

I had to complete several check flights with our instructors, Michael Walsh, Kieran Commins and Cecily Begley. The scariest flights of my life so far.

There is nothing worse than doing "The Patter" with an instructor strapped in the back seat listening intently to your every word. But luckily, I managed to keep it together and not embarrass myself too much.

Part of this module is to answer 60 questions on a variety of subjects taken from the theory element for the Sail Plane License (SPL) – which incidentally you must have before doing the IFP course. It's amazing how rusty I had become since completing my SPL. Those weather questions are a killer—but important!

The last flight I was with Cecily, the final flight, and it was a gusty windy day which made it even more difficult to fly, with the tug jumping below and above the nose of the glider all the while doing "The Patter", trying to fly, and sounding normal. While flying we came across a super thermal and my gut instinct was to begin a steep turn and climb to cloud base. But obviously, since this is a test flight, I kept it straight. Bless Cecily when she said, "I would like to see what thermaling is like..." - no need to ask twice, and around we went and climbed...it ended up being quite a fun flight. Which, I suppose, is why we do it!

While doing the course over the past few months, I have noticed my flying has become more precise and my overall safety awareness, both in the air and on the ground, has been reinforced. I am delighted to have successfully achieved an IFP rating, and I look forward to bringing my love of flying gliders to others as they experience their first time in a glider

LGC Member's Story:

Heather McHugh, TCD Gliding Group



Heather, who is a member of the TCD Women in Gliding Study Group, took her AE flight earlier this year, loved it and has become a regular at the club. She was introduced to the TCD scheme by her brother Trevor, who is club president. Heather is an Early Years Educator & Forest School Leader who spends her work day nurturing and encouraging young children's connection with nature through outdoor learning .

Here she gives a brief account of her experiences so far as a student pilot.

I'm doing it!! I'm flying!!

My childhood was spent living with a

father who had a passion for aviation and built (and later designed) model aircraft ranging from free flight, to control line to radio-controlled models. My brother, Trevor, galloped behind him with an equal passion for aviation. I stayed on the outskirts, dabbling a bit (to please Dad really!) until teenage distractions became more alluring. I then married a sky diver, and after trying that once, stayed firmly on the outskirts of that too. One of my sons, Ciaran, showed a similar pattern of being fascinated with model aircraft and aviation, so about 10 years ago when he was 13, Trevor (who's been a member of the gliding club for many years) organised for him to experience flying in a glider – really cool! I was the taxi driver and rejected any suggestion that I might have a go. With a slight fear of flying, gliding was not for me.

However, last March in a

moment of inspiration and perhaps at an age where fears need to be faced and life needs to be lived. I suggested to Trevor that I'd like to have a go in a glider! At which point Trevor told me about the 'TCD Women in Gliding Study Group' and if I was

up for it, to go through the process of expressing my interest with Trinity and hope for the best. What a fantastic opportunity – this was not something to walk away from!

I am now 15 flights in and loving the

challenge and the feeling that maybe, just maybe, I'll be able to take the controls from start to finish one day. Each flight begins with having to remember to breathe when I hear the words 'you have control', I immediately get that heart racing, clammy hand feeling! But my determination to actually 'do this thing' combined with the calm, encouraging, confident words of all the instructors has got me to 15 flights. It is the most amazing feeling when on some flights you get to do that smooth turn, or watch the altimeter go up when you find lift, or manage to 'line up' and land and, on occasions (not many yet!), relax enough to look around and appreciate the wonder of being airborne in a glider surrounded by spectacular views and that feeling of 'doing this thing'!

Yep, I've had that feeling!! And it's euphoric!!

Times Past - Dan Begley's Kerry Visit

Autumn 1994



IAC NEWS



Gliding in Kerry

By Dan Begley

along within one wingspan of the rocky face of the hill, you make use of the air rising in gullies, bowls and any other place where lift is improved by the shape of the hill. Once higher the demands of closely following the hill are reduced, and the lift becomes more widespread until finally you crest the very top of the mountain. Now you are free to roam. Free to admire God's handiwork from your privileged position. Lift continues to enable you to climb above the mountain top. Both coasts of the peninsula are visible at once and to the west the endless stretch of the Atlantic glistens in the glow of the afternoon sun.

Although you will have by now climbed to over 4,000 feet in ridge lift, you are also scanning the clouds for the characteristic signs of lee wave which will take you much higher. When conditions are right in Kerry records are broken. The current Irish absolute altitude record, set by Brian C. Connolly in 1990, stands at 24,500 ft. and was achieved in a four-hour flight from Inch Strand.

Numerous pilots land with that glow of satisfaction from having completed their FAI five-hour duration flights or climbed high enough to achieve their Silver or Gold height gain. Visiting pilots who experience the world of gliding in Kerry for the first time are lost for words at the wonder of it all!

WHEN you think of Kerry what comes to your mind? – the mountains? the beaches? the scenic wooded walks? To a glider pilot Kerry and especially the Dingle peninsula means all that and more!

The autumn brings a highlight of the gliding year in Ireland, when convoys of glider trailers from Dublin, Ulster and further afield, make their way to the Kingdom of Kerry to sample some of the most challenging mountain flying. There are few places in the world where you will find a beach long enough for a car to tow-launch a glider, with adjacent hills leading to mountains up to 3,000 ft. in height, but Kerry has three of them! Inch strand is about three miles long and gives access to the southern side of Slievemish, a twenty-mile ridge forming the spine of the Dingle peninsula. This suits very well for flying in winds from south-east to west-south-west in direction. For all other winds, the beach at Fermoyle just west of Castlegregory, offers a northerly base and the chance to soar Stradbally mountain, the Conor Pass and Mount Brandon itself. Occasional trips are made to Glenbeigh, to the south across Dingle Bay.

A typical flight from one of the beaches might go like this: Having been launched in your glider from sea level to 1200 ft. in under a minute you fly to the foothills and soar the ridges, climbing in the wind deflected upwards by the hill. As you work your way



Committee Corner — A Summary of our Activities

Trevor McHugh



DGC Chairman, Trevor McHugh grew up in a house full of model aircraft and a near constant exposure to Balsa Cement fumes and tissue paste. From this grew a fascination with all things aviation and a determination to become a pilot "when he grew up". A career as a commercial pilot was not to be but one spring day in 2002 he took the plunge and took his first flight with the Dublin Gliding Club. A year later he went solo.

Like all glider pilots, Trevor gets a kick out of keeping a sailplane in the air through knowing where the lift should be, spotting it and hoping it will be as good as it looks once he gets to it. He also enjoys the learning side of flying like meteorology, aerodynamics and airmanship. And in case you were wondering, he hasn't given up on model aircraft and when he has time, still enjoys building and flying them.

July - Sept 2023 has been a very busy period for the Committee as we have continued to develop our medium- and long-term plans. Progress so far has included:

Garda Vetting: Having previously had to submit Garda Vetting applications through our national bodies, Leinster Gliding Centre is now able to submit our own applications directly to the Garda Vetting office. This has brought about a huge increase in speed of approval.

Funding: The Committee has been actively researching the Capital Grant Funding that might be available to us. LGC has been in close contact with various relevant bodies to both raise our profile and ensure that we avail of whatever funding is available.

Site Infrastructure: Our Site Manager and Technical Officer are working hard on delivering improvements to our site infrastructure. Projects such as the installation of shelving in the hanger and workshop, and the ongoing bunkhouse restoration are improvements already visible. Fleet maintenance is a constant effort and we have scheduled annual inspections and other tasks in the coming months. As a voluntary organisation we need people who are willing to help to ensure that we stay on top of the workload. No matter your experience, we ask that members volunteer to help complete these tasks. Even on non-flying days, members are frequently on site, working to ensure that we can fly once conditions permit - and your help would be much appreciated.

Awareness: The Committee is promoting awareness of our sport among both the general aviation community and the wider population. These include:

Social Media – you may have seen our increased presence on platforms like Facebook. To help keep this fresh, please send Trevor any photos or short videos you may have of our gliding operations. They may not all be published, but they will be gratefully received as a stock of material that can be drawn upon;

Direct Engagement with the wider General Aviation community, in person and via social media;

Awards - LGC has been entered into the Irish Aviation Awards 2023. While competition will be strong, we have put our best foot forward. Regardless of the outcome, our entry will raise awareness of gliding throughout the Irish aviation community. This includes airlines, aircraft operators, aircraft engineering and leasing firms, airports and many other aviation related businesses.

Attendance at public events, with TY2023 being a recent example.

CONTROLLED DEFLECTION

To make up for the recent lack of flying, try this brain teaser set by Q-Nim

“NOT A TOUGH ONE”

Each of the following phrases is a clue to a member of a particular set – with one member of the set omitted. Once you identify a couple of answers the other members of the set should follow easily. When you identify the missing component, send it with your name to the editor of “WhatsUp” and Q-Nim will award a prize for the first entry drawn from the editor’s LGC beanie hat. Closing date for entries: Two weeks from publication date.

Bronze energy?

Tug drugs

Two secretaries

“NYMPH” - Nymph” - “nymph . . .”?

Wing - or mouth

Fib follows overcook

Sounds as if something’s stirring in the kitchen

Winner

I make a mistake in South Africa

Sounds as if he should speak to himself

Ca. one seventieth of 154 lbs

Mail sorted

Mountain – high area

Same clothes

Not out, and help is returning

Sell back

Capital O

Sexy letter

Eleventh of twelve

Communist follows beast following follow.

Support in front – half over over

Adult-rated sunbeam

Large vehicle

Heroine – to a T!

Temporally GMT.

Useful and Interesting Links & Books:

[Circuit planning](#)—Walt Kilroy

[Take-off and aerotow](#) - Rudi Villing

[Turning](#) - Trevor McHugh

[Approach and landing](#) - Ron Staeps

Afterwards...

[B29 Frozen In Time](#)—a fascinating story about a teams attempt to retrieve a plane ditched in the 1950s in Greenland

[On a Wing and a Prayer](#) - the amazing and (mostly) true adventures of an Alaskan Bush Pilot, by Joseph Meloon

If you have seen anything aviation related or read any books you think worth recommending, please send a link to Brian

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Thank you to all the contributors—if you too would like to see your story in this prestigious newsletter, I would love to hear from you!
